



No. CXXXI.]

Contents

[SEPTEMBER 1893

PAGE

A Gentleman of France: being the Memoirs of Gaston de Bonne, Sieur de Marsac	393
By STANLEY J. WEYMAN. Chaps. XXV.—XXVII.	
English Seamen in the Sixteenth Century:	
Lecture III.—Sir John Hawkins and Philip the Second	422
By J. A. FROUDE	
Weather-wise	437
By EDWARD F. STRANGE	
A Modern Cinderella	438
By MRS. A. W. HUNT	
Unter den Linden	453
By the Rev. M. G. WATKINS, M.A.	
The Royal Blue	463
By NETTA SYRETT	
Vesper	471
By AUBYN TREVOR-BATTYE	
Bacterial Life and Light	472
By MRS. PERCY FRANKLAND	
At the Sign of the Ship	478
By ANDREW LANG	

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HUMANITY OF LIFE.

If it be possible, as much as in you lies,
Study to live at peace with all men.

WAR!



O MEN! WHAT ARE YE, AND OUR BEST DESIGNS,
THAT WE MUST WORK BY CRIME TO PUNISH CRIME,
AND SLAY, AS IF DEATH HAD BUT THIS ONE GATE.

Byron.

WHAT IS MORE TERRIBLE THAN WAR?

‘Outraged Nature. She is never tired of killing, till she has taught man the terrible lesson he is so slow to learn,—that nature is only conquered by obeying her. . . . Nature is fierce when she is offended, as she is bounteous and kind when she is obeyed. Ah, would to God that some man had the pictorial eloquence to put before the mothers of England the mass of preventable suffering which exists in England year after year.’—*Kingsley*. How much longer must the causes of this startling array of preventable deaths continue unchecked?

For the Prevention of Disease by Natural Means use
ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT.'

AT HOME, MY HOUSEHOLD GOD; ABROAD, MY VADE MECUM.

A GENERAL OFFICER, writing from Ascot on Jan. 2, 1886, says:—‘Blessings on your “FRUIT SALT”! I trust it is not profane to say so, but, in common parlance, I swear by it. Here stands the cherished bottle, on the chimney-piece of my sanctum, my little idol—at home, my household god; abroad, my *vade mecum*. Think not this the rhapsody of a hypochondriac. No; it is only the outpouring of a grateful heart. The fact is, I am, in common I daresay with numerous old fellows of my age (67), now and then troubled with a tiresome liver. No sooner, however, do I use your cheery remedy, than exit pain—“Richard is himself again!” So highly do I value your composition, that, when taking it, I grudge even the sediment that will always remain at the bottom of the glass. I give, therefore, the following advice to those wise persons who have learned to appreciate its inestimable benefits:—

‘When “ENO'S SALT” betimes you take,
No waste of this elixir make;
But drain the dregs, and lick the cup
Of this the perfect pick-me-up.’

A NATURAL IMPERATIVE HYGIENIC NEED.—‘I had long suffered from a general derangement of the system (liver and kidneys), and for which my local chemist advised me to take a saline preparation of his, but, finding it did not relieve me, I was induced to try ENO'S “FRUIT SALT”’ this has been to me more of a *Godsend* than a medicine. I cannot praise it too highly. I may inform you that my wife has found ENO'S “FRUIT SALT” very useful when our children are teething, the Salt being so soothing and cooling, and much preferable to the usual teething powders. Yours obediently,

‘H. F., 17 Chester Terrace, Brighton, Sussex, July 19, 1893.
‘To Mr. J. C. ENO.’

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The value of ENO'S “FRUIT SALT” cannot be told. Its success in Europe, Asia, Africa, America, Australia, and New Zealand proves it.

Only Truth can give True Reputation; only Reality can be of Real Profit.—The Secret of Success—Sterling Honesty of Purpose. Without it Life is a sham.

CAUTION.—Examine each Bottle, and see that the Capsule is marked ENO'S “FRUIT SALT.” Without it, you have been imposed on by a worthless imitation.

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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

SEPTEMBER 1893.

A Gentleman of France:

*BEING THE MEMOIRS OF GASTON DE BONNE,
SIEUR DE MARSAC.*

BY STANLEY J. WEYMAN.

CHAPTER XXV.

TERMS OF SURRENDER.

I STILL had my hand on the trap when a touch on the shoulder caused me to turn, and in a moment apprised me of the imminence of a new peril; a peril of such a kind that, summoning all my resolution, I could scarcely hope to cope with it. Henry was at my elbow. He had taken off his mask, and a single glance at his countenance warned me that that had happened of which I had already felt some fear. The glitter of intense excitement shone in his eyes. His face, darkly-flushed and wet with sweat, betrayed overmastering emotion, while his teeth, tight clenched in the effort to restrain the fit of trembling which possessed him, showed between his lips like those of a corpse. The novelty of the danger which menaced him, the absence of his gentlemen, and of all the familiar faces and surroundings, without which he never moved, the hour, the mean house, and his isolation among strangers, had proved too much for nerves long weakened by his course of living, and for a courage, proved indeed in the field, but unequal to a sudden stress. Though he still strove to preserve

his dignity, it was alarmingly plain to my eyes that he was on the point of losing, if he had not already lost, all self-command.

‘Open !’ he muttered between his teeth, pointing impatiently to the trap with the hand with which he had already touched me. ‘Open, I say, sir !’

I stared at him, startled and confounded. ‘But your Majesty,’ I ventured to stammer, ‘forgets that I have not yet——’

‘Open, I say !’ he repeated passionately. ‘Do you hear me, sir ? I desire that this door be opened.’ His lean hand shook as with the palsy, so that the gems on it twinkled in the light and rattled as he spoke.

I looked helplessly from him to the women and back again, seeing in a flash all the dangers which might follow from the discovery of his presence there—dangers which I had not before formulated to myself, but which seemed in a moment to range themselves with the utmost clearness before my eyes. At the same time I saw what seemed to me to be a way of escape ; and emboldened by the one and the other, I kept my hand on the trap and strove to parley with him.

‘Nay, but, sire,’ I said hurriedly, yet still with as much deference as I could command, ‘I beg you to permit me first to repeat what I have seen. M. de Bruhl is without, and I counted six men whom I believe to be his following. They are ruffians ripe for any crime ; and I implore your Majesty rather to submit to a short imprisonment——’

I paused struck dumb on that word, confounded by the passion which lightened in the king’s face. My ill-chosen expression had indeed applied the spark to his wrath. Predisposed to suspicion by a hundred treacheries, he forgot the perils outside in the one idea which on the instant possessed his mind ; that I would confine his person, and had brought him hither for no other purpose. He glared round him with eyes full of rage and fear, and his trembling lips breathed rather than spoke the word ‘Imprison ?’

Unluckily, a trifling occurrence added at this moment to his disorder, and converted it into frenzy. Someone outside fell heavily against the door ; this, causing madame to utter a low shriek, seemed to shatter the last remnant of the king’s self-control. Stamping his foot on the floor, he cried to me with the utmost wildness to open the door—by which I had hitherto kept my place.

But, wrongly or rightly, I was still determined to put off open-

ing it; and I raised my hands with the intention of making a last appeal to him. He misread the gesture, and retreating a step, with the greatest suddenness whipped out his sword, and in a moment had the point at my breast, and his wrist drawn back to thrust.

It has always been my belief that he would not have dealt the blow, but that the mere touch of the hilt, awaking the courage which he undoubtedly possessed, and which did not desert him in his last moments, would have recalled him to himself. But the opportunity was not given him, for while the blade yet quivered, and I stood motionless, controlling myself by an effort, my knee half bent and my eyes on his, *Mademoiselle de la Vire* sprang forward at his back, and with a loud scream clutched his elbow. The king, surprised, and ignorant who held him, flung up his point wildly, and striking the lamp above his head with his blade, shattered it in an instant, bringing down the pottery with a crash and reducing the room to darkness; while the screams of the women, and the knowledge that we had a madman among us, peopled the blackness with a hundred horrors.

Fearing above all for *mademoiselle*, I made my way as soon as I could recover my wits to the embers of the fire, and regardless of the king's sword, which I had a vague idea was darting about in the darkness, I searched for and found a half-burnt stick, which I blew into a blaze. With this, still keeping my back to the room, I contrived to light a taper that I had noticed standing by the hearth; and then, and then only, I turned to see what I had to confront.

Mademoiselle de la Vire stood in a corner, half-fierce, half-terrified, and wholly flushed. She had her hand wrapped up in a 'kerchief already stained with blood; and from this I gathered that the king in his frenzy had wounded her slightly. Standing before her mistress, with her hair bristling, like a wild-cat's fur, and her arms akimbo, was *Fanchette*, her harsh face and square form instinct with fury and defiance. *Madame de Bruhl* and *Simon* cowered against the wall not far from them; and in a chair, into which he had apparently just thrown himself, sat the king, huddled up and collapsed, the point of his sword trailing on the ground beside him, and his nerveless hand scarce retaining force to grip the pommel.

In a moment I made up my mind what to do, and going to him in silence, I laid my pistols, sword, and dagger on a stool by his side. Then I knelt.

'The door, sire,' I said, 'is there. It is for your Majesty to open it when you please. Here, too, sire, are my weapons. I am your prisoner, the Provost-Marshal is outside, and you can at a word deliver me to him. Only one thing I beg, sire,' I continued earnestly, 'that your Majesty will treat as a delusion the idea that I meditated for a moment disrespect or violence to your person.'

He looked at me dully, his face pale, his eyes fish-like. 'Sanctus, man!' he muttered, 'why did you raise your hand?'

'Only to implore your Majesty to pause a moment,' I answered, watching the intelligence return slowly to his face. 'If you will deign to listen I can explain in half a dozen words, sire. M. de Bruhl's men are six or seven, the Provost has eight or nine; but the former are the wilder blades, and if M. de Bruhl find your Majesty in my lodging, and infer his own defeat, he will be capable of any desperate stroke. Your person would hardly be safe in his company through the streets. And there is another consideration,' I went on, observing with joy that the king listened, and was gradually regaining his composure. 'That is, the secrecy you desired to preserve, sire, until this matter should be well advanced. M. de Rosny laid the strictest injunctions on me in that respect, fearing an *émeute* in Blois should your Majesty's plans become known.'

'You speak fairly,' the king answered with returning energy, though he avoided looking at the women. 'Bruhl is likely enough to raise one. But how am I to get out, sir?' he continued, querulously. 'I cannot remain here. I shall be missed, man! I am not a hedge-captain, neither sought nor wanted!'

'If your Majesty would trust me?' I said slowly and with hesitation.

'Trust you!' he retorted peevishly, holding up his hands and gazing intently at his nails, of the shape and whiteness of which he was prouder than any woman. 'Have I not trusted you? If I had not trusted you, should I have been here? But that you were a Huguenot—God forgive me for saying it!—I would have seen you in hell before I would have come here with you!'

I confess to having heard this testimony to the Religion with a pride which made me forget for a moment the immediate circumstances—the peril in which we stood, the gloomy room darkly lighted by a single candle, the scared faces in the background, even the king's huddled figure, in which dejection and pride

struggled for expression. For a moment only ; then I hastened to reply, saying that I doubted not I could still extricate his Majesty without discovery.

‘ In Heaven’s name do it, then ! ’ he answered sharply. ‘ Do what you like, man ! Only get me back into the castle, and it shall not be a Huguenot will entice me out again. I am over old for these adventures ! ’

A fresh attack on the door taking place as he said this induced me to lose no time in explaining my plan, which he was good enough to approve, after again upbraiding me for bringing him into such a dilemma. Fearing lest the door should give way prematurely, notwithstanding the bars I had provided for it, and goaded on by Madame de Bruhl’s face, which evinced the utmost terror, I took the candle and attended his Majesty into the inner room ; where I placed my pistols beside him, but silently reassumed my sword and dagger. I then returned for the women, and indicating by signs that they were to enter, held the door open for them.

Mademoiselle, whose bandaged hand I could not regard without emotion, though the king’s presence and the respect I owed him forbade me to utter so much as a word, advanced readily until she reached the doorway abreast of me. There, however, looking back, and seeing Madame de Bruhl following her, she stopped short, and darting a haughty glance at me, muttered, ‘ And —that lady ? Are we to be shut up together, sir ? ’

‘ Mademoiselle,’ I answered quickly in the low tone she had used herself, ‘ have I ever asked anything dishonourable of you ? ’

She seemed by a slight movement of the head to answer in the negative.

‘ Nor do I now,’ I replied with earnestness. ‘ I entrust to your care a lady who has risked great peril for *us* ; and the rest I leave to you.’

She looked me very keenly in the face for a second, and then, without answering, she passed on, Madame and Fanchette following her in that order. I closed the door and turned to Simon ; who by my direction had blown the embers of the fire into a blaze so as to partially illumine the room, in which only he and I now remained. The lad seemed afraid to meet my eye, and owing to the scene at which he had just assisted, or to the onslaught on the door, which grew each moment more furious, betrayed greater restlessness than I had lately observed in him. I did not doubt his fidelity,

however, or his devotion to mademoiselle ; and the orders I had to give him were simple enough.

‘ This is what you have got to do,’ I said, my hand already on the bars. ‘ The moment I am outside secure this door. After that, open to no one except Maignan. When he applies, let him in with caution, and bid him, as he loves M. de Rosny, take his men as soon as the coast is clear, and guard the King of France to the castle. Charge him to be brave and wary, for his life will answer for the king’s.’

Twice I repeated this ; then fearing lest the Provost-Marshal should make good his word and apply a ram to the door, I opened the trap. A dozen angry voices hailed my appearance, and this with so much violence and impatience that it was some time before I could get a hearing ; the knaves threatening me if I would not instantly open, and persisting that I should do so without more words. Their leader at length quieted them, but it was plain that his patience too was worn out. ‘ Do you surrender or do you not ? ’ he said. ‘ I am not going to stay out of my bed all night for you ! ’

‘ I warn you,’ I answered, ‘ that the order you have there has been cancelled by the king ! ’

‘ That is not my business,’ he rejoined hardily.

‘ No, but it will be when the king sends for you to-morrow morning,’ I retorted ; at which he looked somewhat moved. ‘ However, I will surrender to you on two conditions,’ I continued, keenly observing the coarse faces of his following. ‘ First, that you let me keep my arms until we reach the gate-house, I giving you my parole to come with you quietly. That is number one.’

‘ Well,’ the Provost-Marshal said more civilly, ‘ I have no objection to that.’

‘ Secondly, that you do not allow your men to break into my lodgings. I will come out quietly, and so an end. Your order does not direct you to sack my goods.’

‘ Tut, tut ! ’ he replied ; ‘ I want you to come out. I do not want to go in.’

‘ Then draw your men back to the stairs,’ I said. ‘ And if you keep terms with me, I will uphold you to-morrow. For your orders will certainly bring you into trouble. M. de Retz, who procured it this morning, is away, you know. M. de Villequier may be gone to-morrow. But depend upon it, M. de Rambouillet will be here ! ’

The remark was well timed and to the point. It startled the man as much as I had hoped it would. Without raising any objection he ordered his men to fall back and guard the stairs; and I on my side began to undo the fastenings of the door.

The matter was not to be so easily concluded, however; for Bruhl's rascals, in obedience, no doubt, to a sign given by their leader, who stood with Fresnoy on the upper flight of stairs, refused to withdraw; and even hustled the Provost-Marshal's men when the latter would have obeyed the order. The officer, already heated by delay, replied by laying about him with his staff, and in a twinkling there seemed to be every prospect of a very pretty *mélée*, the end of which it was impossible to foresee.

Reflecting, however, that if Bruhl's men routed their opponents our position might be made worse rather than better, I did not act on my first impulse, which was to see the matter out where I was. Instead, I seized the opportunity to let myself out, while Simon fastened the door behind me. The Provost-Marshal was engaged at the moment in a wordy dispute with Fresnoy; whose villainous countenance, scarred by the wound which I had given him at Chizé, and flushed with passion, looked its worst by the light of the single torch which remained. In one respect the villain had profited by his present patronage, for he was decked out in a style of tawdry magnificence. But I have always remarked this about dress, that while a shabby exterior does not entirely obscure a gentleman, the extreme of fashion is powerless to gild a knave.

Seeing me on a sudden at the Provost's elbow, he recoiled with a change of countenance so ludicrous that that officer was himself startled, and only held his ground on my saluting him civilly and declaring myself his prisoner. I added a warning that he should look to the torch which remained; seeing that if it failed we were both like to have our throats cut in the confusion.

He took the hint promptly, and calling the link-man to his side prepared to descend, bidding Fresnoy and his men, who remained clumped at the head of the stairs, make way for us without ado. They seemed much inclined, however, to dispute our passage, and replying to his invectives with rough taunts, displayed so hostile a demeanour that the Provost, between regard for his own importance and respect for Bruhl, appeared for a moment at

a loss what to do ; and seemed rather relieved than annoyed when I begged leave to say a word to M. de Bruhl.

'If you can bring his men to reason,' he replied testily, 'speak your fill to him !'

Stepping to the foot of the upper flight, on which Bruhl retained his position, I saluted him formally. He returned my greeting with a surly, watchful look only, and drawing his cloak more tightly round him affected to gaze down at me with disdain ; which ill concealed, however, both the triumph he felt and the hopes of vengeance he entertained. I was especially anxious to learn whether he had tracked his wife hither, or was merely here in pursuance of his general schemes against me, and to this end I asked him with as much irony as I could compass to what I was to attribute his presence. 'I am afraid I cannot stay to offer you hospitality,' I continued ; 'but for that you have only your friend M. Villequier to thank !'

'I am greatly obliged to you,' he answered with a devilish smile, 'but do not let that affect you. When you are gone I propose to help myself, my friend, to whatever takes my taste.'

'Do you ?' I retorted coolly—not that I was unaffected by the threat and the villainous hint which underlay the words, but that, fully expecting them, I was ready with my answer. 'We will see about that.' And therewith I raised my fingers to my lips, and, whistling shrilly, cried 'Maignan ! Maignan !' in a clear voice.

I had no need to cry the name a third time, for before the Provost-Marshal could do more than start at this unexpected action, the landing above us rang under a heavy tread, and the man I called, descending the stairs swiftly, appeared on a sudden within arm's length of M. de Bruhl ; who, turning with an oath, saw him, and involuntarily recoiled. At all times Maignan's hardy and confident bearing was of a kind to impress the strong ; but on this occasion there was an added dash of recklessness in his manner which was not without its effect on the spectators. As he stood there smiling darkly over Bruhl's head, while his hand toyed carelessly with his dagger, and the torch shone ruddily on his burly figure, he was so clearly an antagonist in a thousand that, had I sought through Blois, I might not have found his fellow for strength and *sang-froid*. He let his black eyes rove from one to the other, but took heed of me only, saluting me with effusion and a touch of the Gascon which was in place here, if ever.

I knew how M. de Rosny dealt with him, and followed the

pattern as far as I could. ‘Maignan!’ I said curtly, ‘I have taken a lodging for to-night elsewhere. When I am gone you will call out your men and watch this door. If anyone tries to force an entrance you will do your duty.’

‘You may consider it done,’ he replied.

‘Even if the person be M. de Bruhl here,’ I continued.

‘Precisely.’

‘You will remain on guard,’ I went on, ‘until to-morrow morning if M. de Bruhl remains here; but whenever he leaves you will take your orders from the persons inside, and follow them implicitly.’

‘Your Excellency’s mind may be easy,’ he answered, handling his dagger.

Dismissing him with a nod, I turned with a smile to M. de Bruhl, and saw that between rage at this unexpected check and chagrin at the insult put upon him, his discomfiture was as complete as I could wish. As for Fresnoy, if he had seriously intended to dispute our passage, he was no longer in the mood for the attempt. Yet I did not let his master off without one more prick. ‘That being settled, M. de Bruhl,’ I said pleasantly, ‘I may bid you good evening. You will doubtless honour me at Chaverny to-morrow. But we will first let Maignan look under the bridge!’

CHAPTER XXVI.

MEDITATIONS.

EITHER the small respect I had paid M. de Bruhl, or the words I had let fall respecting the possible disappearance of M. Villequier, had had so admirable an effect on the Provost-Marshal’s mind that from the moment of leaving my lodgings he treated me with the utmost civility; permitting me even to retain my sword, and assigning me a sleeping-place for the night in his own apartments at the Gate-house.

Late as it was, I could not allow so much politeness to pass unacknowledged. I begged leave, therefore, to distribute a small gratuity among his attendants, and requested him to do me the honour of drinking a bottle of wine with me. This being speedily procured, at such an expense as is usual in these places, where prisoners pay, according as they are rich or poor, in purse

or person, kept us sitting for an hour, and finally sent us to our pallets perfectly satisfied with one another.

The events of the day, however, and particularly one matter, on which I have not dwelt at length, proved as effectual to prevent my sleeping as if I had been placed in the dampest cell below the castle. So much had been crowded into a time so short that it seemed as if I had had until now no opportunity of considering whether I was being hurried, or what fortune awaited me at the end of this turmoil. From the first appearance of M. d'Agen in the morning, with the startling news that the Provost-Marshal was seeking me, to my final surrender and encounter with Bruhl on the stairs, the chain of events had run out so swiftly that I had scarcely had time at any particular period to consider how I stood, or the full import of the latest check or victory. Now that I had leisure I lived the day over again, and, recalling its dangers and disappointments, felt thankful that all had ended so fairly.

I had the most perfect confidence in Maignan, and did not doubt that Bruhl would soon weary, if he had not already wearied, of a profitless siege. In an hour at most—and it was not yet midnight—the king would be free to go home; and with that would end, as far as he was concerned, the mission with which M. de Rosny had honoured me. The task of communicating his Majesty's decision to the King of Navarre would doubtless be entrusted to M. de Rambouillet, or some person of similar position and influence; and in the same hands would rest the honour and responsibility of the treaty which, as we all know now, gave after a brief interval and some bloodshed, and one great providence, a lasting peace to France. But it must ever be—and I recognised this that night with a bounding heart, which told of some store of youth yet unexhausted—a matter of lasting pride to me that I, whose career but now seemed closed in failure, had proved the means of conferring so especial a benefit on my country and religion.

Remembering, however, the King of Navarre's warning that I must not look to him for reward, I felt greatly doubtful in what direction the scene would next open to me; my main dependence being upon M. de Rosny's promise that he would make my fortune his own care. Tired of the Court at Blois, and the atmosphere of intrigue and treachery which pervaded it, and with which I hoped I had now done, I was still at a loss to see how I could recross the Loire in face of the Vicomte de Turenne's enmity. I might have troubled myself much more with speculating upon this point had

I not found—in close connection with it—other and more engrossing food for thought in the capricious behaviour of Mademoiselle de la Vire.

To that behaviour it seemed to me that I now held the clue. I suspected with as much surprise as pleasure that only one construction could be placed upon it—a construction which had strongly occurred to me on catching sight of her face when she intervened between me and the king.

Tracing the matter back to the moment of our meeting in the antechamber at St. Jean d'Angely, I remembered the jest which Mathurine had uttered at our joint expense. Doubtless it had dwelt in mademoiselle's mind, and exciting her animosity against me had prepared her to treat me with contumely when, contrary to all probability, we met again, and she found herself placed in a manner in my hands. It had inspired her harsh words and harsher looks on our journey northwards, and contributed with her native pride to the low opinion I had formed of her when I contrasted her with my honoured mother.

But I began to think it possible that the jest had worked in another way as well, by keeping me before her mind and impressing upon her the idea—after my re-appearance at Chizé more particularly—that our fates were in some way linked. Assuming this, it was not hard to understand her manner at Rosny when, apprised that I was no impostor, and regretting her former treatment of me, she still recoiled from the feelings which she began to recognise in her own breast. From that time, and with this clue, I had no difficulty in tracing her motives, always supposing that this suspicion, upon which I dwelt with feelings of wonder and delight, were well founded.

Middle-aged and grizzled, with the best of my life behind me, I had never dared to think of her in this way before. Poor and comparatively obscure, I had never raised my eyes to the wide possessions said to be hers. Even now I felt myself dazzled and bewildered by the prospect so suddenly unveiled. I could scarcely, without vertigo, recall her as I had last seen her, with her hand wounded in my defence; nor, without emotions painful in their intensity, fancy myself restored to the youth of which I had taken leave, and to the rosy hopes and plannings which visit most men once only, and then in early years. Hitherto I had deemed such things the lot of others.

Daylight found me—and no wonder—still diverting myself with these charming speculations; which had for me, be it

remembered, all the force of novelty. The sun chanced to rise that morning in a clear sky, and brilliantly for the time of year ; and words fail me when I look back, and try to describe how delicately this simple fact enhanced my pleasure ! I sunned myself in the beams, which penetrated my barred window ; and tasting the early freshness with a keen and insatiable appetite, I experienced to the full that peculiar aspiration after goodness which Providence allows such moments to awaken in us in youth ; but rarely when time and the camp have blunted the sensibilities.

I had not yet arrived at the stage at which difficulties have to be reckoned up, and the chief drawback to the tumult of joy I felt took the shape of regret that my mother no longer lived to feel the emotions proper to the time, and to share in the prosperity which she had so often and so fondly imagined. Nevertheless, I felt myself drawn closer to her. I recalled with the most tender feelings, and at greater leisure than had before been the case, her last days and words, and particularly the appeal she had uttered on mademoiselle's behalf. And I vowed, if it were possible, to pay a visit to her grave before leaving the neighbourhood, that I might there devote a few moments to the thought of the affection which had consecrated all women in my eyes.

I was presently interrupted in these reflections by a circumstance which proved in the end diverting enough, though far from reassuring at the first blush. It began in a dismal rattling of chains in the passage below and on the stairs outside my room ; which were paved, like the rest of the building, with stone. I waited with impatience and some uneasiness to see what would come of this ; and my surprise may be imagined when, the door being unlocked, gave entrance to a man in whom I recognised on the instant deaf Matthew—the villain whom I had last seen with Fresnoy in the house in the Rue Valois. Amazed at seeing him here, I sprang to my feet in fear of some treachery, and for a moment apprehended that the Provost-Marshal had basely given me over to Bruhl's custody. But a second glance informing me that the man was in irons—hence the noise I had heard—I sat down again to see what would happen.

It then appeared that he merely brought me my breakfast, and was a prisoner in less fortunate circumstances than myself ; but as he pretended not to recognise me, and placed the things before me in obdurate silence, and I had no power to make him hear, I failed to learn how he came to be in durance. The

Provost-Marshall, however, came presently to visit me, and brought me in token that the good-fellowship of the evening still existed a pouch of the Queen's herb; which I accepted for politeness' sake rather than from any virtue I found in it. And from him I learned how the rascal came to be in his charge.

It appeared that Fresnoy, having no mind to be hampered with a wounded man, had deposited him on the night of our *mélée* at the door of a hospital attached to a religious house in that part of the town. The Fathers had opened to him, but before taking him in put, according to their custom, certain questions. Matthew had been primed with the right answers to these questions, which were commonly a form; but, unhappily for him, the Superior by chance or mistake began with the wrong one.

'You are not a Huguenot, my son?' he said.

'In God's name, I am!' Matthew replied with simplicity, believing he was asked if he was a Catholic.

'What?' the scandalised Prior ejaculated, crossing himself in doubt, 'are you not a true son of the Church?'

'Never!' quoth our deaf friend—thinking all went well.

'A heretic!' cried the monk.

'Amen to that!' replied Matthew innocently; never doubting but that he was asked the third question, which was, commonly, whether he needed aid.

Naturally after this there was a very pretty commotion, and Matthew, vainly protesting that he was deaf, was hurried off to the Provost-Marshall's custody. Asked how he communicated with him, the Provost answered that he could not, but that his little godchild, a girl only eight years old, had taken a strange fancy to the rogue, and was never so happy as when talking to him by means of signs, of which she had invented a great number. I thought this strange at the time, but I had proof before the morning was out that it was true enough, and that the two were seldom apart, the little child governing this grim cut-throat with unquestioned authority.

After the Provost was gone I heard the man's fetters clanking again. This time he entered to remove my cup and plate, and surprised me by speaking to me. Maintaining his former sullenness, and scarcely looking at me, he said abruptly: 'You are going out again?'

I nodded assent.

‘Do you remember a bald-faced bay horse that fell with you?’ he muttered, keeping his dogged glance on the floor.

I nodded again.

‘I want to sell the horse,’ he said. ‘There is not such another in Blois, no, nor in Paris! Touch it on the near hip with the whip and it will go down as if shot. At other times a child might ride it. It is in a stable, the third from the Three Pigeons, in the Ruelle Amancy. Fresnoy does not know where it is. He sent to ask yesterday, but I would not tell him.’

Some spark of human feeling which appeared in his lowering, brutal visage as he spoke of the horse led me to desire further information. Fortunately the little girl appeared at that moment at the door in search of her playfellow; and through her I learned that the man’s motive for seeking to sell the horse was fear lest the dealer in whose charge it stood should dispose of it to repay himself for its keep, and he, Matthew, lose it without return.

Still I did not understand why he applied to me, but I was well pleased when I learned the truth. Base as the knave was, he had an affection for the bay, which had been his only property for six years. Having this in his mind, he had conceived the idea that I should treat it well, and should not, because he was in prison and powerless, cheat him of the price.

In the end I agreed to buy the horse for ten crowns, paying as well what was due at the stable. I had it in my head to do something also for the man, being moved to this partly by an idea that there was good in him, and partly by the confidence he had seen fit to place in me, which seemed to deserve some return. But a noise below stairs diverted my attention. I heard myself named, and for the moment forgot the matter.

CHAPTER XXVII.

TO ME, MY FRIENDS!

I WAS impatient to learn who had come, and what was their errand with me; and being still in that state of exaltation in which we seem to hear and see more than at other times, I remarked a peculiar lagging in the ascending footsteps, and a lack of buoyancy, which was quick to communicate itself to my mind. A vague

dread fell upon me as I stood listening. Before the door opened I had already conceived a score of disasters. I wondered that I had not inquired earlier concerning the king's safety, and in fine I experienced in a moment that complete reaction of the spirits which is too frequently consequent upon an excessive flow of gaiety.

I was prepared, therefore, for heavy looks, but not for the persons who wore them nor the strange bearing the latter displayed on entering. My visitors proved to be M. d'Agen and Simon Fleix. And so far well. But the former, instead of coming forward to greet me with the punctilious politeness which always characterised him, and which I had thought to be proof against every kind of surprise and peril, met me with downcast eyes and a countenance so gloomy as to augment my fears a hundredfold; since it suggested all those vague and formidable pains which M. de Rambouillet had hinted might await me in a prison. I thought nothing more probable than the entrance after them of a gaoler laden with gyves and handcuffs; and saluting M. François with a face which, do what I would, fashioned itself upon his, I had scarce composure sufficient to place the poor accommodation of my room at his disposal.

He thanked me; but he did it with so much gloom and so little naturalness that I grew more impatient with each laboured syllable. Simon Fleix had slunk to the window and turned his back on us. Neither seemed to have anything to say. But a state of suspense was one which I could least endure to suffer; and impatient of the constraint which my friend's manner was fast imparting to mine, I asked him at once and abruptly if his uncle had returned.

'He rode in about midnight,' he answered, tracing a pattern on the floor with the point of his riding-switch.

I felt some surprise on hearing this, since d'Agen was still dressed and armed for the road, and was without all those prettinesses which commonly marked his attire. But as he volunteered no further information, and did not even refer to the place in which he found me, or question me as to the adventures which had lodged me there, I let it pass, and asked him if his party had overtaken the deserters.

'Yes,' he answered, 'with no result.'

'And the king?'

'M. de Rambouillet is with him now,' he rejoined, still bending over his tracing.

This answer relieved the worst of my anxieties, but the

manner of the speaker was so distract and so much at variance with the studied *insouciance* which he usually affected, that I only grew more alarmed. I glanced at Simon Fleix, but he kept his face averted, and I could gather nothing from it; though I observed that he, too, was dressed for the road, and wore his arms. I listened, but I could hear no sounds which indicated that the Provost-Marshal was approaching. Then on a sudden I thought of Mademoiselle de la Vire. Could it be that Maignan had proved unequal to his task?

I started impetuously from my stool under the influence of the emotion which this thought naturally aroused, and seized M. d'Agen by the arm. 'What has happened?' I exclaimed. 'Is it Bruhl? Did he break into my lodgings last night? What!' I continued, staggering back as I read the confirmation of my fears in his face. 'He did?'

M. d'Agen, who had risen also, pressed my hand with convulsive energy. Gazing into my face, he held me a moment thus embraced, his manner a strange mixture of fierceness and emotion. 'Alas, yes,' he answered, 'he did, and took away those whom he found there! Those whom he found there, you understand! But M. de Rambouillet is on his way here, and in a few minutes you will be free. We will follow together. If we overtake them—well. If not, it will be time to talk.'

He broke off, and I stood looking at him, stunned by the blow, yet in the midst of my own horror and surprise retaining sense enough to wonder at the gloom on his brow and the passion which trembled in his words. What had this to do with him? 'But Bruhl?' I said at last, recovering myself with an effort—'how did he gain access to the room? I left it guarded.'

'By a ruse, while Maignan and his men were away,' was the answer. 'Only this lad of yours was there. Bruhl's men overpowered him.'

'Which way has Bruhl gone?' I muttered, my throat dry, my heart beating wildly.

He shook his head. 'All we know is that he passed through the south gate with eleven horsemen, two women, and six led horses, at daybreak this morning,' he answered. 'Maignan came to my uncle with the news, and M. de Rambouillet went at once, early as it was, to the king to procure your release. He should be here now.'

I looked at the barred window, the most horrible fears at my heart; from it to Simon Fleix, who stood beside it, his attitude

expressing the utmost dejection. I went towards him. 'You hound !' I said in a low voice, 'how did it happen ?'

To my surprise he fell in a moment on his knees, and raised his arm as though to ward off a blow. 'They imitated Maignan's voice,' he muttered hoarsely. 'We opened.'

'And you dare to come here and tell me !' I cried, scarcely restraining my passion. 'You, to whom I entrusted her. You, whom I thought devoted to her. You have destroyed her, man !'

He rose as suddenly as he had cowered down. His thin, nervous face underwent a startling change ; growing on a sudden hard and rigid, while his eyes began to glitter with excitement. 'I have destroyed her ? Ay, mon dieu ! I *have*,' he cried, speaking to my face, and no longer flinching or avoiding my eye. 'You may kill me, if you like. You do not know all. It was I who stole the favour she gave you from your doublet, and then said M. de Rosny had taken it ! It was I who told her you had given it away ! It was I who brought her to the Little Sisters', that she might see you with Madame de Bruhl ! It was I who did all, and destroyed her ! Now you know ! Do with me what you like !'

He opened his arms as though to receive a blow, while I stood before him astounded beyond measure by a disclosure so unexpected ; full of righteous wrath and indignation, and yet uncertain what I ought to do. 'Did you also let Bruhl into the room on purpose ?' I cried at last.

'I ?' he exclaimed, with a sudden flash of rage in his eyes. 'I would have died first !'

I do not know how I might have taken this confession ; but at the moment there was a trampling of horses outside, and before I could answer him I heard M. de Rambouillet speaking in haughty tones, at the door below. The Provost-Marshal was with him, but his lower notes were lost in the ring of bridles and the stamping of impatient hoofs. I looked towards the door of my room, which stood ajar, and presently the two entered, the Marquis listening with an air of contemptuous indifference to the apologies which the other, who attended at his elbow, was pouring forth. M. de Rambouillet's face reflected none of the gloom and despondency which M. d'Agen's exhibited in so marked a degree. He seemed, on the contrary, full of gaiety and good-humour, and, coming forward and seeing me, embraced me with the utmost kindness and condescension.

'Ha ! my friend,' he said cheerfully, 'so I find you here after all ! But never fear. I am this moment from the king with an

order for your release. His Majesty has told me all, making me thereby your lasting friend and debtor. As for this gentleman,' he continued, turning with a cold smile to the Provost-Marshal, who seemed to be trembling in his boots, 'he may expect an immediate order also. M. de Villequier has wisely gone a-hunting, and will not be back for a day or two.'

Racked as I was by suspense and anxiety, I could not assail him with immediate petitions. It behoved me first to thank him for his prompt intervention, and this in terms as warm as I could invent. Nor could I in justice fail to commend the Provost to him, representing the officer's conduct to me, and lauding his civility. All this, though my heart was sick with thought and fear and disappointment, and every minute seemed an age.

'Well, well,' the Marquis said with stately good-nature, 'we will lay the blame on Villequier then. He is an old fox, however, and ten to one he will go scot-free. It is not the first time he has played this trick. But I have not yet come to the end of my commission,' he continued pleasantly. 'His Majesty sends you this, M. de Marsac, and bade me say that he had loaded it for you.'

He drew from under his cloak as he spoke the pistol which I had left with the king, and which happened to be the same M. de Rosny had given me. I took it, marvelling impatiently at the careful manner in which he handled it; but in a moment I understood, for I found it loaded to the muzzle with gold-pieces, of which two or three fell and rolled upon the floor. Much moved by this substantial mark of the king's gratitude, I was nevertheless for pocketing them in haste; but the Marquis, to satisfy a little curiosity on his part, would have me count them, and brought the tale to a little over two thousand livres, without counting a ring set with precious stones which I found among them. This handsome present diverted my thoughts from Simon Fleix, but could not relieve the anxiety I felt on mademoiselle's account. The thought of her position so tortured me that M. de Rambouillet began to perceive my state of mind, and hastened to assure me that before going to the Court he had already issued orders calculated to assist me.

'You desire to follow this lady, I understand?' he said. 'What with the king, who is enraged beyond the ordinary by this outrage, and François there, who seemed beside himself when he heard the news, I have not got any very clear idea of the position.'

'She was entrusted to me by—by one, sir, well known to you,' I answered hoarsely. 'My honour is engaged to him and to

her. If I follow on my feet and alone, I must follow. If I cannot save her, I can at least punish the villains who have wronged her.'

'But the man's wife is with them,' he said in some wonder.

'That goes for nothing,' I answered.

He saw the strong emotion under which I laboured, and which scarcely suffered me to answer him with patience; and he looked at me curiously, but not unkindly. 'The sooner you are off, the better then,' he said, nodding. 'I gathered as much. The man Maignan will have his fellows at the south gate an hour before noon, I understand. François has two lackeys, and he is wild to go. With yourself and the lad there you will muster nine swords. I will lend you two. I can spare no more, for we may have an *émeute* at any moment. You will take the road, therefore eleven in all, and should overtake them some time to-night if your horses are in condition.'

I thanked him warmly, without regarding his kindly statement that my conduct on the previous day had laid him under lasting obligations to me. We went down together, and he transferred two of his fellows to me there and then, bidding them change their horses for fresh ones and meet me at the south gate. He sent also a man to my stable—Simon Fleix having disappeared in the confusion—for the Cid, and was in the act of inquiring whether I needed anything else, when a woman slipped through the knot of horsemen who surrounded us as we stood in the doorway of the house, and, throwing herself upon me, grasped me by the arm. It was Fanchette. Her harsh features were distorted with grief, her cheeks were mottled with the violent weeping in which such persons vent their sorrow. Her hair hung in long wisps on her neck. Her dress was torn and draggled, and there was a great bruise over her eye. She had the air of one frantic with despair and misery.

She caught me by the cloak, and shook me so that I staggered. 'I have found you at last!' she cried joyfully. 'You will take me with you! You will take me to her!'

Though her words tried my composure, and my heart went out to her, I strove to answer her according to the sense of the matter. 'It is impossible,' I said sternly. 'This is a man's errand. We shall have to ride day and night, my good woman.'

'But I will ride day and night too!' she replied passionately, flinging the hair from her eyes, and looking wildly from me to M. de Rambouillet. 'What would I not do for her? I am as

strong as a man, and stronger. Take me, take me, I say, and when I meet that villain I will tear him limb from limb !'

I shuddered, listening to her; but remembering that, being country bred, she was really as strong as she said, and that likely enough some advantage might accrue to us from her perfect fidelity and devotion to her mistress, I gave a reluctant consent. I sent one of M. de Rambouillet's men to the stable where the deaf man's bay was standing, bidding him pay whatever was due to the dealer, and bring the horse to the south-gate; my intention being to mount one of my men on it, and furnish the woman with a less tricky steed.

The briskness of these and the like preparations, which even for one of my age and in my state of anxiety were not devoid of pleasure, prevented my thoughts dwelling on the future. Content to have M. François' assistance without following up too keenly the train of ideas which his readiness suggested, I was satisfied also to make use of Simon without calling him to instant account for his treachery. The bustle of the streets, which the confirmation of the king's speedy departure had filled with surly, murmuring crowds, tended still further to keep my fears at bay; while the contrast between my present circumstances, as I rode through them well-appointed and well-attended, with the Marquis by my side, and the poor appearance I had exhibited on my first arrival in Blois, could not fail to inspire me with hope that I might surmount this danger also, and in the event find Mademoiselle safe and uninjured. I took leave of M. de Rambouillet with many expressions of esteem on both sides, and a few minutes before eleven reached the rendezvous outside the south gate.

M. d'Agen and Maignan advanced to meet me, the former still presenting an exterior so stern and grave that I wondered to see him, and could scarcely believe he was the same gay spark whose elegant affectations had more than once caused me to smile. He saluted me in silence; Maignan with a sheepish air, which ill-concealed the savage temper defeat had roused in him. Counting my men, I found we mustered ten only, but the equerry explained that he had despatched a rider ahead to make inquiries and leave word for us at convenient points; to the end that we might follow the trail with as few delays as possible. Highly commanding Maignan for his forethought in this, I gave the word to start, and crossing the river by the St. Gervais Bridge, we took the road for Selles at a smart trot.

The weather had changed much in the last twenty-four hours. The sun shone brightly, with a warm west wind, and the country already showed signs of the early spring which marked that year. If, the first hurry of departure over, I had now leisure to feel the gnawing of anxiety and the tortures inflicted by an imagination which, far outstripping us, rode with those whom we pursued and shared their perils, I found two sources of comfort still open to me. No man who has seen service can look on a little band of well-appointed horsemen without pleasure. I reviewed the stalwart forms and stern faces which moved beside me, and comparing their decent order and sound equipments with the scurvy foulness of the men who had ridden north with me, thanked God, and ceased to wonder at the indignation which Matthew and his fellows had aroused in mademoiselle's mind. My other source of satisfaction, the regular beat of hoofs and ring of bridles continually augmented. Every step took us farther from Blois—farther from the close town and reeking streets and the Court; which, if it no longer seemed to me a shambles, befouled by one great deed of blood—experience had removed that impression—retained an appearance infinitely mean and miserable in my eyes. I hated and loathed its intrigues and its jealousies, the folly which trifled in a closet while rebellion mastered France, and the pettiness which recognised no wisdom save that of balancing party and party. I thanked God that my work there was done, and could have welcomed any other occasion that forced me to turn my back on it, and sent me at large over the pure heaths, through the woods, and under the wide heaven, speckled with moving clouds.

But such springs of comfort soon ran dry. M. d'Agen's gloomy rage and the fiery gleam in Maignan's eye would have reminded me, had I been in any danger of forgetting the errand on which we were bound, and the need, exceeding all other needs, which compelled us to lose no moment that might be used. Those whom we followed had five hours' start. The thought of what might happen in those five hours to the two helpless women whom I had sworn to protect burned itself into my mind; so that to refrain from putting spurs to my horse and riding recklessly forward taxed at times all my self-control. The horses seemed to crawl. The men rising and falling listlessly in their saddles maddened me. Though I could not hope to come upon any trace of our quarry for many hours, perhaps for days, I scanned the long, flat heaths unceasingly, searched every marshy bottom

before we descended into it, and panted for the moment when the next low ridge should expose to our view a fresh track of wood and waste. The rosy visions of the past night, and those fancies in particular which had made the dawn memorable, recurred to me, as his deeds in the body (so men say) to a hopeless drowning wretch. I grew to think of nothing but Bruhl and revenge. Even the absurd care with which Simon avoided the neighbourhood of Fanchette, riding anywhere so long as he might ride at a distance from the angry woman's tongue and hand—which provoked many a laugh from the men, and came to be the joke of the company—failed to draw a smile from me.

We passed through Contres, four leagues from Blois, an hour after noon, and three hours later crossed the Cher at Selles, where we stayed awhile to bait our horses. Here we had news of the party before us, and henceforth had little doubt that Bruhl was making for the Limousin; a district in which he might rest secure under the protection of Turenne, and safely defy alike the King of France and the King of Navarre. The greater the necessity, it was plain, for speed; but the roads in that neighbourhood, and forward as far as Valancy, proved heavy and foundrous, and it was all we could do to reach Levroux with jaded horses three hours after sunset. The probability that Bruhl would lie at Châteauroux, five leagues farther on—for I could not conceive that under the circumstances he would spare the women—would have led me to push forward had it been possible; but the darkness and the difficulty of finding a guide who would venture deterred me from the hopeless attempt, and we stayed the night where we were.

Here we first heard of the plague; which was said to be ravaging Châteauroux and all the country farther south. The landlord of the inn would have regaled us with many stories of it, and particularly of the swiftness with which men and even cattle succumbed to its attacks. But we had other things to think of, and between anxiety and weariness had clean forgotten the matter when we rose next morning.

We started shortly after daybreak, and for three leagues pressed on at tolerable speed. Then, for no reason stated, our guide gave us the slip as we passed through a wood, and was seen no more. We lost the road, and had to retrace our steps. We strayed into a slough, and extracted ourselves with difficulty. The man who was riding the bay I had purchased forgot the secret which I had imparted to him, and got an ugly fall. In fine, after all these

mishaps it wanted little of noon, and less to exhaust our patience, when at length we came in sight of Châteauroux.

Before entering the town we had still an adventure; for we came at a turn in the road on a scene as surprising as it was at first inexplicable. A little north of the town, in a coppice of box facing the south and west, we happed suddenly on a rude encampment, consisting of a dozen huts and booths, set back from the road and formed, some of branches of evergreen trees laid clumsily together, and some of sacking stretched over poles. A number of men and women of decent appearance lay on the short grass before the booths, idly sunning themselves; or moved about, cooking and tending fires, while a score of children raced to and fro with noisy shouts and laughter. The appearance of our party on the scene caused an instant panic. The women and children fled screaming into the wood, spreading the sound of breaking branches farther and farther as they retreated; while the men, a miserable pale-faced set, drew together, and seeming half-inclined to fly also, regarded us with glances of fear and suspicion.

Remarking that their appearance and dress were not those of vagrants, while the booths seemed to indicate little skill or experience in the builders, I bade my companions halt, and advanced alone.

‘What is the meaning of this, my men?’ I said, addressing the first group I reached. ‘You seem to have come a-Maying before the time. Whence are you?’

‘From Châteauroux,’ the foremost answered sullenly. His dress, now I saw him nearer, seemed to be that of a respectable townsman.

‘Why?’ I replied. ‘Have you no homes?’

‘Ay, we have homes,’ he answered with the same brevity.

‘Then why, in God’s name, are you here?’ I retorted, marking the gloomy air and downcast faces of the group. ‘Have you been harried?’

‘Ay, harried by the Plague!’ he answered bitterly. ‘Do you mean to say you have not heard? In Châteauroux there is one man dead in three. Take my advice, sir—you are a brave company—turn, and go home again.’

‘Is it as bad as that?’ I exclaimed. I had forgotten the landlord’s gossip, and the explanation struck me with the force of surprise.

‘Ay, is it! Do you see the blue haze?’ he continued, pointing with a sudden gesture to the lower ground before us, over which

a light pall of summery vapour hung still and motionless. ‘Do you see it? Well, under that there is death! You may find food in Châteauroux, and stalls for your horses, and a man to take money; for there are still men there. But cross the Indre, and you will see sights worse than a battle-field a week old! You will find no living soul in house or stable or church, but corpses plenty. The land is cursed! cursed for heresy, some say! Half are dead, and half are fled to the woods! And if you do not die of the plague, you will starve.’

‘God forbid!’ I muttered, thinking with a shudder of those before us. This led me to ask him if a party resembling ours in number, and including two women, had passed that way. He answered, Yes, after sunset the evening before; that their horses were stumbling with fatigue and the men swearing in pure weariness. He believed that they had not entered the town, but had made a rude encampment half a mile beyond it; and had again broken this up, and ridden southwards two or three hours before our arrival.

‘Then we may overtake them to-day?’ I said.

‘By your leave, sir,’ he answered, with grave meaning. ‘I think you are more likely to meet them.’

Shrugging my shoulders, I thanked him shortly and left him; the full importance of preventing my men hearing what I had heard—lest the panic which possessed these townspeople should seize on them also being already in my mind. Nevertheless the thought came too late, for on turning my horse I found one of the foremost, a long, solemn-faced man, had already found his way to Maignan’s stirrup; where he was dilating so eloquently upon the enemy which awaited us southwards that the countenances of half the troopers were as long as his own, and I saw nothing for it but to interrupt his oration by a smart application of my switch to his shoulders. Having thus stopped him, and rated him back to his fellows, I gave the word to march. The men obeyed mechanically, we swung into a canter, and for a moment the danger was over.

But I knew that it would recur again and again. Stealthily marking the faces round me, and listening to the whispered talk which went on, I saw the terror spread from one to another. Voices which earlier in the day had been raised in song and jest grew silent. Great reckless fellows of Maignan’s following, who had an oath and a blow for all comers, and to whom the deepest

ford seemed to be child's play, rode with drooping heads and knitted brows ; or scanned with ill-concealed anxiety the strange haze before us, through which the roofs of the town, and here and there a low hill or line of poplars, rose to plainer view. Maignan himself, the stoutest of the stout, looked grave, and had lost his swaggering air. Only three persons preserved their *sang-froid* entire. Of these, M. d'Agen rode as if he had heard nothing, and Simon Fleix as if he feared nothing ; while Fanchette, gazing eagerly forward, saw, it was plain, only one object in the mist, and that was her mistress's face.

We found the gates of the town open, and this, which proved to be the herald of stranger sights, daunted the hearts of my men more than the most hostile reception. As we entered, our horses' hoofs, clattering loudly on the pavement, awoke a hundred echoes in the empty houses to right and left. The main street, flooded with sunshine, which made its desolation seem a hundred times more formidable, stretched away before us, bare and empty ; or haunted only by a few slinking dogs, and prowling wretches, who fled, affrighted at the unaccustomed sounds, or stood and eyed us listlessly as we passed. A bell tolled ; in the distance we heard the wailing of women. The silent ways, the black cross which marked every second door, the frightful faces which once or twice looked out from upper windows and blasted our sight, infected my men with terror so profound and so ungovernable that at last discipline was forgotten ; and one shoving his horse before another in narrow places, there was a scuffle to be first. One, and then a second, began to trot. The trot grew into a shuffling canter. The gates of the inn lay open, nay seemed to invite us to enter ; but no one turned or halted. Moved by a single impulse we pushed breathlessly on and on, until the open country was reached, and we who had entered the streets in silent awe, swept out and over the bridge as if the fiend were at our heels.

That I shared in this flight causes me no shame even now, for my men were at the time ungovernable, as the best-trained troops are when seized by such panics ; and, moreover, I could have done no good by remaining in the town, where the strength of the contagion was probably greater and the inn larder like to be as bare as the hillside. Few towns are without a hostelry outside the gates for the convenience of knights of the road or those who would avoid the dues, and Châteauroux proved no exception to this rule. A short half-mile from the walls we drew rein before a second

encampment raised about a wayside house. It scarcely needed the sound of music mingled with brawling voices to inform us that the wilder spirits of the town had taken refuge here, and were seeking to drown in riot and debauchery, as I have seen happen in a besieged place, the remembrance of the enemy which stalked abroad in the sunshine. Our sudden appearance, while it put a stop to the mimicry of mirth, brought out a score of men and women in every stage of drunkenness and dishevelment, of whom some, with hiccoughs and loose gestures, cried to us to join them, while others swore horribly at being recalled to the present, which, with the future, they were endeavouring to forget.

I cursed them in return for a pack of craven wretches, and threatening to ride down those who obstructed us, ordered my men forward; halting eventually a quarter of a mile farther on, where a wood of groundling oaks which still wore last year's leaves afforded fair shelter. Afraid to leave my men myself, lest some should stray to the inn and others desert altogether, I requested M. d'Agen to return thither with Maignan and Simon, and bring us what forage and food we required. This he did with perfect success, though not until after a scuffle, in which Maignan showed himself a match for a hundred. We watered the horses at a neighbouring brook, and assigning two hours to rest and refreshment—a great part of which M. d'Agen and I spent walking up and down in moody silence, each immersed in his own thoughts—we presently took the road again with renewed spirits.

But a panic is not easily shaken off, nor is any fear so difficult to combat and defeat as the fear of the invisible. The terrors which food and drink had for a time thrust out presently returned with sevenfold force. Men looked uneasily in one another's faces, and from them to the haze which veiled all distant objects. They muttered of the heat, which was sudden, strange, and abnormal at that time of the year. And by-and-by they had other things to speak of. We met a man, who ran beside us and begged of us, crying out in a dreadful voice that his wife and four children lay unburied in the house. A little farther on, beside a well, the corpse of a woman with a child at her breast lay poisoning the water; she had crawled to it to appease her thirst, and died of the draught. Last of all, in a beech-wood near Lotier we came upon a lady living in her coach, with one or two panic-stricken women for her only attendants. Her husband was in Paris, she told me; half her servants were dead, the rest had fled. Still she retained in a remarkable degree both courage and courtesy, and accepting with fortitude my reasons

and excuses for perforce leaving her in such a plight, gave me a clear account of Bruhl and his party, who had passed her some hours before. The picture of this lady gazing after us with perfect good-breeding, as we rode away at speed, followed by the lamentations of her women, remains with me to this day; filling my mind at once with admiration and melancholy. For, as I learned later, she fell ill of the plague where we left her in the beech-wood, and died in a night with both her servants.

The intelligence we had from her inspired us to push forward, sparing neither spur nor horseflesh, in the hope that we might overtake Bruhl before night should expose his captives to fresh hardships and dangers. But the pitch to which the dismal sights and sounds I have mentioned, and a hundred like them, had raised the fears of my following did much to balk my endeavours. For a while, indeed, under the influence of momentary excitement, they spurred their horses to the gallop, as if their minds were made up to face the worst; but presently they checked them despite all my efforts, and, lagging slowly and more slowly, seemed to lose all spirit and energy. The desolation which met our eyes on every side, no less than the death-like stillness which prevailed, even the birds, as it seemed to us, being silent, chilled the most reckless to the heart. Maignan's face lost its colour, his voice its ring. As for the rest, starting at a sound and wincing if a leather galled them, they glanced backwards twice for once they looked forwards, and held themselves ready to take to their heels and be gone at the least alarm.

Noting these signs, and doubting if I could trust even Maignan, I thought it prudent to change my place, and falling to the rear, rode there with a grim face and a pistol ready to my hand. It was not the least of my annoyances that M. d'Agen appeared to be ignorant of any cause for apprehension save such as lay before us, and riding on in the same gloomy fit which had possessed him from the moment of starting, neither sought my opinion nor gave his own, but seemed to have undergone so complete and mysterious a change that I could think of one thing only that could have power to effect so marvellous a transformation. I felt his presence a trial rather than a help, and reviewing the course of our short friendship, which a day or two before had been so great a delight to me—as the friendship of a young man commonly is to one growing old—I puzzled myself with much wondering whether there could be rivalry between us.

Sunset, which was welcome to my company, since it removed

the haze, which they regarded with superstitious dread, found us still plodding through a country of low ridges and shallow valleys, both clothed in oak-woods. Its short brightness died away, and with it my last hope of surprising Bruhl before I slept. Darkness fell upon us as we wended our way slowly down a steep hillside where the path was so narrow and difficult as to permit only one to descend at a time. A stream of some size, if we might judge from the noise it made, poured through the ravine below us, and presently, at the point where we believed the crossing to be, we espied a solitary light shining in the blackness. To proceed farther was impossible, for the ground grew more and more precipitous; and, seeing this, I bade Maignan dismount, and leaving us where we were, go for a guide to the house from which the light issued.

He obeyed, and plunging into the night, which in that pit between the hills was of an inky darkness, presently returned with a peasant and a lanthorn. I was about to bid the man guide us to the ford, or to some level ground where we could picket the horses, when Maignan gleefully cried out that he had news. I asked what news.

‘Speak up, *manant!*’ he said, holding up his lanthorn so that the light fell on the man’s haggard face and unkempt hair. ‘Tell his Excellency what you have told me, or I will skin you alive, little man !’

‘Your other party came to the ford an hour before sunset,’ the peasant answered, staring dully at us. ‘I saw them coming, and hid myself. They quarrelled by the ford. Some were for crossing, and some not.’

‘They had ladies with them?’ M. d’Agen said suddenly.

‘Ay, two, your Excellency,’ the clown answered, ‘riding like men. In the end they did not cross for fear of the plague, but turned up the river, and rode westwards towards St. Gaultier.’

‘St. Gaultier!’ I said. ‘Where is that? Where does the road to it go to besides?’

But the peasant’s knowledge was confined to his own neighbourhood. He knew no world beyond St. Gaultier, and could not answer my question. I was about to bid him show us the way down, when Maignan cried out that he knew more.

‘What?’ I asked.

‘Arnidieu! he heard them say where they were going to spend the night !’

‘Ha!’ I cried. ‘Where?’

'In an old ruined castle two leagues from this, and between here and St. Gaultier,' the equerry answered, forgetting in his triumph both plague and panic. 'What do you say to that, your Excellency? It is so, sirrah, is it not?' he continued, turning to the peasant. 'Speak, Master Jacques, or I will roast you before a slow fire!'

But I did not wait to hear the answer. Leaping to the ground, I took the Cid's rein on my arm, and cried impatiently to the man to lead us down.

(To be continued.)

*English Seamen
in the Sixteenth Century.¹*

LECTURE III.

SIR JOHN HAWKINS AND PHILIP THE SECOND.

MY LAST lecture left Hawkins preparing to start on his third and, as it proved, most eventful voyage. I mentioned that he was joined by a young relation of whom I must say a few preliminary words. Francis Drake was a Devonshire man, like Hawkins himself and Raleigh and Davis and Gilbert, and many other famous men of those days. He was born at Tavistock somewhere about 1540. He told Camden that he was of mean extraction. He meant merely that he was proud of his parents and made no idle pretensions to noble birth. His father was a tenant of the Earl of Bedford, and must have stood well with him, for Francis Russell, the heir of the earldom, was the boy's godfather. From him Drake took his Christian name. The Drakes were early converts to Protestantism. Trouble rising at Tavistock on the Six Articles Bill, they removed to Kent, where the father, probably through Lord Bedford's influence, was appointed a lay chaplain in Henry VIII.'s fleet at Chatham. In the next reign when the Protestants were uppermost he was ordained and became vicar of Upnor on the Medway. Young Francis took early to the water, and made acquaintance with a ship-master trading to the Channel ports, who took him on board his ship and bred him as a sailor. The boy distinguished himself, and his patron when he died left Drake his vessel in his will. For several years Drake stuck steadily to his coasting work, made money, and made a solid reputation. His ambition grew with his success. The sea-going English were all full of Hawkins and his West Indian exploits. The Hawkinses and the Drakes were near relations. Hearing that there was to be another expedition, and having obtained his cousin's consent, Francis Drake sold his brig, bought the *Judith*, a handier and faster vessel, and with a few stout sailors from the river went down to Plymouth and joined.

¹ Four Lectures delivered at Oxford, Easter Term, 1893.

De Silva had sent word to Philip that Hawkins was again going out, and preparations had been made to receive him. Suspecting nothing, Hawkins with his four consorts sailed, as before, in October 1567. The start was ominous. He was caught and badly knocked about by an equinoctial in the Bay of Biscay. He lost his boats. The *Jesus* strained her timbers and leaked, and he so little liked the look of things that he even thought of turning back and giving up the expedition for the season. However, the weather mended. They put themselves to rights at the Canaries, picked up their spirits, and proceeded. The slave-catching was managed successfully, though with some increased difficulty. The cargo with equal success was disposed of at the Spanish settlements. At one place the planters came off in their boats at night to buy. At Rio de la Hacha, where the most imperative orders had been sent to forbid his admittance, Hawkins landed a force as before and took possession of the town, of course with the connivance of the settlers. At Cartagena he was similarly ordered off, and as Cartagena was strongly fortified he did not venture to meddle with it. But elsewhere he found ample markets for his wares. He sold all his blacks. By this and by other dealings he had collected what is described as a vast treasure of gold, silver, and jewels. The hurricane season was approaching and he made the best of his way homewards with his spoils in the fear of being overtaken by it. Unluckily for him he had lingered too long. He had passed the west point of Cuba and was working up the back of the island when a hurricane came down on him. The gale lasted four days. The ships' bottoms were foul and they could make no way. Spars were lost and rigging carried away. The *Jesus*, which had not been seaworthy all along, leaked worse than ever and lost her rudder. Hawkins looked for some port in Florida, but found the coast shallow and dangerous, and was at last obliged to run for San Juan de Ulloa at the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico.

San Juan de Ulloa is a few miles only from Vera Cruz. It was at that time the chief port of Mexico, through which all the traffic passed between the colony and the mother country, and was thus a place of some consequence. It stands on a small bay facing towards the north. Across the mouth of this bay lies a narrow ridge of sand and shingle, half a mile long, which acts as a natural breakwater and forms the harbour. This ridge, or island as it was called, was uninhabited, but it had been faced on the inner front by a wall. The water was deep alongside, and vessels

could thus lie in perfect security, secured by their cables to rings let into the masonry.

The prevailing wind was from the north, bringing in a heavy surf on the back of the island. There was an opening at both ends, but only one available for vessels of large draught. In this the channel was narrow, and a battery at the end of the breakwater would completely command it. The town stood on the opposite side of the bay.

Into a Spanish port thus constructed Hawkins entered with his battered squadron on September 16, 1568. He could not have felt entirely easy. But he probably thought that he had no ill will to fear from the inhabitants generally, and that the Spanish authorities would not be strong enough to meddle with him. His ill star had brought him there at a time when Alvarez de Baçan, the same officer who had destroyed the English ships at Gibraltar, was daily expected from Spain—sent by Philip, as it proved, specially to look for him. Hawkins, when he appeared outside, had been mistaken for the Spanish admiral, and it was under this impression that he had been allowed to enter. The error was quickly discovered on both sides.

Though still ignorant that he was himself De Baçan's particular object, yet De Baçan was the last officer whom in his crippled condition he would have cared to encounter. Several Spanish merchantmen were in the port richly loaded: with these of course he did not meddle, though, if reinforced, they might perhaps meddle with him. As his best resource he despatched a courier on the instant to Mexico to inform the viceroy of his arrival, to say that he had an English squadron with him; that he had been driven in by stress of weather and need of repairs; that the Queen was an ally of the King of Spain; and that as he understood a Spanish fleet was likely soon to arrive, he begged the viceroy to make arrangements to prevent disputes.

As yet, as I said in the last lecture, there was no Inquisition in Mexico. It was established there three years later for the special benefit of the English. But so far there was no ill will towards the English—rather the contrary. Hawkins had hurt no one, and the negro trading had been eminently popular. The viceroy might perhaps have connived at Hawkins's escape, but again by ill fortune he was himself under orders of recall, and his successor was coming out in this particular fleet with De Baçan.

Had he been well disposed and free to act it would still have been too late, for the very next morning, September 17, De Baçan

was off the harbour mouth with thirteen heavily armed galleons and frigates. The smallest of them carried probably 200 men, and the odds were now tremendous. Hawkins's vessels lay ranged along the inner bank or wall of the island. He instantly occupied the island itself and mounted guns at the point covering the way in. He then sent a boat off to De Baçan to say that he was an Englishman, that he was in possession of the port, and must forbid the entrance of the Spanish fleet till he was assured that there was to be no violence. It was a strong measure to shut a Spanish admiral out of a Spanish port in a time of profound peace. Still the way in was difficult, and could not be easily forced if resolutely defended. The northerly wind was rising; if it blew into a gale the Spaniards would be on a lee shore. Under desperate circumstances, desperate things will be done. Hawkins in his subsequent report thus explains his dilemma:—

'I was in two difficulties. Either I must keep them out of the port, which with God's grace I could easily have done, in which case with a northerly wind rising they would have been wrecked, and I should have been answerable; or I must risk their playing false, which on the whole I preferred to do.'

The northerly gale it appears did not rise, or the English commander might have preferred the first alternative. Three days passed in negotiation. De Baçan and Don Enriquez the new viceroy were naturally anxious to get into shelter out of a dangerous position, and were equally desirous not to promise any more than was absolutely necessary. The final agreement was that De Baçan and the fleet should enter without opposition. Hawkins might stay till he had repaired his damages and buy and sell what he wanted; and further, as long as they remained the English were to keep possession of the island. This article Hawkins says was long resisted, but was consented to at last. It was absolutely necessary, for with the island in their hands the Spaniards had only to cut the English cables, and they would have driven ashore across the harbour.

The treaty so drawn was formally signed. Hostages were given on both sides, and De Baçan came in. The two fleets were moored as far apart from each other as the size of the port would allow. Courtesies were exchanged and for two days all went well. It is likely that the viceroy and the admiral did not at first know that it was the very man whom they had been sent out to sink or capture who was lying so close to them. When they did know it they may have looked on him as a pirate with whom, as with

heretics, there was no need to keep faith. Any way the rat was in the trap, and De Baçan did not mean to let him out. The *Jesus* lay furthest in ; the *Minion* lay beyond her towards the entrance, moored apparently to a ring on the quay, but free to move ; and the *Judith*, further out again, moored in the same way. Nothing is said of the two small vessels remaining.

De Baçan made his preparations silently, covered by the town. He had men in abundance ready to act where he should direct. On the third day, the 20th of September, at noon, the *Minion*'s crew had gone to dinner, when they saw a large hulk of 900 tons slowly towing up alongside of them. Not liking such a neighbour, they had their cable ready to slip and began to set their canvas. On a sudden, shots and cries were heard from the town. Parties of English who were on land were set upon ; many were killed ; the rest were seen flinging themselves into the water and swimming off to the ships. At the same instant the guns of the galleons and on the shore batteries opened fire on the *Jesus* and her consorts, and in the smoke and confusion three hundred Spaniards swarmed out of the hulk and sprang on the *Minion*'s decks. The *Minion*'s men instantly cut them down or drove them overboard, hoisted sail, and forced their way out of the harbour, followed by the *Judith*. The *Jesus* was left alone, unable to stir. She defended herself desperately. In the many actions which were fought afterwards between the English and the Spaniards, there was never any more gallant or more severe. De Baçan's own ship was sunk and the vice-admiral was set on fire. The Spanish, having an enormous advantage in numbers, were able to land a force on the island, seize the English battery there, cut down the gunners, and turn the guns close at hand on the devoted *Jesus*. Still she fought on, defeating every attempt to board, till at length De Baçan sent down fire-ships on her, and then the end came. All that Hawkins had made by his voyage, money, bullion, the ship herself, had to be left to their fate. Hawkins himself with the survivors of the crew took to their boats, dashed through the enemy, who vainly tried to take them, and struggled out after the *Minion* and the *Judith*. It speaks ill for De Baçan that with so large a force at his command, and in such a position, a single Englishman escaped to tell the story.

Even when outside Hawkins's situation was still critical and might well be called desperate. The *Judith* was but fifty tons ; the *Minion* not above a hundred. They were now crowded up with men. They had little water on board, and there had been no

time to refill their store-chests, or fit themselves for sea. Happily the weather was moderate. If the wind had risen, nothing could have saved them. They anchored two miles off to put themselves in some sort of order. The Spanish fleet did not venture to molest further so desperate a foe. On Saturday the 25th they set sail, scarcely knowing whither to turn. To attempt an ocean voyage as they were would be certain destruction, yet they could not trust longer to De Baçan's cowardice or forbearance. There was supposed to be a shelter of some kind somewhere on the east side of the Gulf of Mexico, where it was hoped they might obtain provisions. They reached the place on October 8, but found nothing. English sailors have never been wanting in resolution. They knew that if they all remained on board every one of them must starve. A hundred volunteered to land and take their chance. The rest on short rations might hope to make their way home. The sacrifice was accepted. The hundred men were put on shore. They wandered for a few days in the woods, feeding on roots and berries, and shot at by the Indians. At length they reached a Spanish station, where they were taken and sent as prisoners to Mexico. There was, as I said, no Holy Office as yet in Mexico. The new viceroy, though he had been in the fight at San Juan de Ulloa, was not implacable. They were treated at first with humanity; they were fed, clothed, taken care of, and then distributed among the plantations. Some were employed as overseers, some as mechanics. Others, who understood any kind of business, were allowed to settle in towns, make money, and even marry and establish themselves. Perhaps Philip heard of it, and was afraid that so many heretics might introduce the plague. The quiet time lasted three years; at the end of those years the Inquisitors arrived, and then, as if these poor men had been the special object of that delightful institution, they were hunted up, thrown into dungeons, examined on their faith, tortured, some burnt in an *auto da fé*, some lashed through the streets of Mexico naked on horseback and returned to their prisons. Those who did not die under this pious treatment were passed over to the Holy Office at Seville and were condemned to the galleys.

Here I leave them for the moment—we shall presently hear of them again in a very singular connection. The *Minion* and *Judith* meanwhile pursued their melancholy way. They parted company. The *Judith* being the better sailor arrived first, and reached Plymouth in December torn and tattered. Drake rode off post immediately to carry the bad news to London. The *Minion's*

fate was worse. She made her course through the Bahama Channel, her crew dying as if struck with a pestilence, till at last there were hardly men enough left to handle the sails. They fell too far south for England, and at length had to put into Vigo, where their probable fate would be a Spanish prison. Happily they found other English vessels in the roads there. Fresh hands were put on board and fresh provisions. With these supplies Hawkins reached Mount's Bay a month later than the *Judith*, in January 1569.

Drake had told the story, and all England was ringing with it. Englishmen always think their own countrymen are in the right. The Spaniards, already in evil odour with the sea-going population, were accused of abominable treachery. The splendid fight which Hawkins had made raised him into a national idol, and though he had suffered financially, his loss was made up in reputation and authority. Every privateer in the West was eager to serve under the leadership of the hero of San Juan de Ulloa. He speedily found himself in command of a large irregular squadron, and even Cecil recognised his consequence. His chief and constant anxiety was for the comrades whom he had left behind, and he talked of a new expedition to recover them, or revenge them if they had been killed—but all things had to wait. They probably found means of communicating with him, and as long as there was no Inquisition in Mexico he may have learnt that there was no immediate occasion for action.

Elizabeth put a brave face on her disappointment. She knew that she was surrounded with treason, but she knew also that the boldest course was the safest. She had taken Alva's money and was less than ever inclined to restore it. She had the best of the bargain in the arrest of the Spanish and English ships and cargoes. Alva would not encourage Philip to declare war with England till the Netherlands were completely reduced, and Philip with his leaden foot (*pié de plomo*) always preferred patience and intrigue. Time and he and the Pope were three powers, which in the end he thought would prove irresistible, and indeed it seemed after Hawkins's return as if Philip would turn out to be right. The presence of the Queen of Scots in England had set in flame the Catholic nobles. The wages of Alva's troops had been wrung somehow out of the wretched Provinces, and his supreme ability and inexorable resolution were steadily grinding down the revolt. Every port in Holland and Zealand was in Alva's hands. Elizabeth's throne was undermined by the Ridolfi conspiracy, the most dangerous which she had ever had to encounter. The only

Protestant fighting power left on the sea, which could be entirely depended on, was in the privateer fleet sailing, most of them, under a commission from the Prince of Orange.

This fleet was the strangest phenomenon in naval history. It was half Dutch, half English, with a flavour of Huguenot, and was commanded by a Flemish noble, Count de la Mark. Its headquarters were in the Downs or Dover roads, where it could watch the narrow seas, and seize every Spanish ship that passed which was not too strong to be meddled with. The cargoes taken were openly sold in Dover market. If the Spanish ambassador is to be believed in a complaint which he addressed to Cecil, Spanish gentlemen taken prisoners were set up to public auction there for the ransom which they would fetch, and were disposed of for one hundred pounds each. If Alva sent cruisers from Antwerp to burn them out, they retreated under the guns of Dover Castle. Roving squadrons of them flew down to the Spanish coasts, pillaged churches, carried off church plate, and the captains drank success to piracy at their banquet out of chalices. The Spanish merchants at last estimated the property destroyed at three millions, and they said that if their flag could no longer protect them they must decline to make further contracts for the supply of the Netherlands army.

It was life or death to Elizabeth. The Ridolfi plot, an elaborate and far-reaching conspiracy to give her crown to Mary Stuart and to make away with heresy, was all but complete. The Pope and Philip had approved; Alva was to invade; the Duke of Norfolk was to head an insurrection in the Eastern counties. Never had she been in greater danger. Elizabeth was herself to be murdered. The intention was known, but the particulars of the conspiracy had been kept so secret that she had not evidence enough to take measures to protect herself. The privateers at Dover were a sort of protection; they would at least make Alva's crossing more difficult; but the most pressing exigency was the discovery of the details of the treason. Nothing was to be gained by concession; the only salvation was in daring.

At Antwerp there was a certain Doctor Story, maintained by Alva there to keep a watch on English heretics. Story had been a persecutor under Mary, and had defended heretic burning in Elizabeth's first parliament. He had refused the oath of allegiance, had left the country, and had taken to treason. Cecil wanted evidence, and this man he knew could give it. A pretended informer brought Story word that there was an English vessel in the

Scheldt which he would find worth examining. Story was tempted on board. The hatches were closed over him. He was delivered two days after at the Tower, when his secrets were squeezed out of him by the rack and he was then hanged.

Something was learnt, but less, still, than Cecil needed to take measures to protect the Queen. And now once more, and in a new character, we are to meet John Hawkins. Three years had passed since the catastrophe at San Juan de Ulloa. He had learnt to his sorrow that his poor companions had fallen into the hands of the Holy Office at last; had been burnt, lashed, starved in dungeons or worked in chains in the Seville yards; and his heart, not a very tender one, bled at the thoughts of them. The finest feature in the seamen of those days was their devotion to one another. Hawkins determined that, one way or other, these old comrades of his should be rescued. Entreaties were useless; force was impossible. There might still be a chance with cunning. He would risk anything, even the loss of his soul, to save them.

De Silva had left England. The Spanish ambassador was now Don Guerau or Gerald de Espes, and to him had fallen the task of watching and directing the conspiracy. Philip was to give the signal, the Duke of Norfolk and other Catholic peers were to rise and proclaim the Queen of Scots. Success would depend on the extent of the disaffection in England itself; and the ambassador's business was to welcome and encourage all symptoms of discontent. Hawkins knew generally what was going on, and he saw in it an opportunity of approaching Philip on his weak side. Having been so much in the Canaries, he probably spoke Spanish fluently. He called on Don Guerau, and with audacious coolness represented that he and many of his friends were dissatisfied with the Queen's service. He said he had found her faithless and ungrateful, and he and they would gladly transfer their allegiance to the King of Spain, if the King of Spain would receive them. For himself, he would undertake to bring over the whole privateer fleet of the West, and in return he asked for nothing but the release of a few poor English seamen who were in prison at Seville.

Don Guerau was full of the belief that the whole nation was ready to rebel. He eagerly swallowed the bait which Hawkins threw to him. He wrote to Alva, he wrote to Philip's secretary, Cayas, expatiating on the importance of securing such an addition to their party. It was true, he admitted, that Hawkins had been a pirate, but piracy was a common fault of the English, and no

wonder when the Spaniards submitted to being plundered so meekly ; the man who was offering his services was bold, resolute, capable, and had great influence with the English sailors ; he strongly advised that such a recruit should be encouraged.

Alva would not listen. Philip, who shuddered at the very name of Hawkins, was incredulous. Don Guerau had to tell Sir John that the King at present declined his offer, but advised him to go himself to Madrid or to send some confidential friend with assurances and explanations.

Another figure now enters on the scene, a George Fitzwilliam. I do not know who he was or why Hawkins chose him for his purpose. The Duke of Feria was one of Philip's most trusted ministers. He had married an English lady who had been a maid of honour to Queen Mary. It is possible that Fitzwilliam had some acquaintance with her or with her family. At any rate he went to the Spanish court ; he addressed himself to the Ferias ; he won their confidence, and by their means was admitted to an interview with Philip. He represented Hawkins as a faithful Catholic who was indignant at the progress of heresy in England, who was eager to assist in the overthrow of Elizabeth and the elevation of the Queen of Scots, and was able and willing to carry along with him the great Western privateer fleet which had become so dreadful to the Spanish mind. Philip listened and was interested. It was only natural, he thought, that heretics should be robbers and pirates. If they could be recovered to the Church, their bad habits would leave them. The English navy was the most serious obstacle to the intended invasion. Still Hawkins ! The Achines of his nightmares ! It could not be. He asked Fitzwilliam if his friend was acquainted with the Queen of Scots or the Duke of Norfolk. Fitzwilliam was obliged to say that he was not. The credentials of John Hawkins were his own right hand. He was making the King a magnificent offer : nothing less than a squadron of the finest ships in the world—not perhaps in the best condition, he added, with cool British impudence, owing to the Queen's parsimony, but easily to be put in order again if the King would pay the seamen's wages and advance some money for repairs. The release of a few poor prisoners was a small price to ask for such a service.

The King was still wary, watching the bait like an old pike, but hesitating to seize it ; but the duke and duchess were willing to be themselves securities for Fitzwilliam's faith, and Philip promised at last that if Hawkins would send him a letter of

recommendation from the Queen of Scots herself, he would then see what could be done. The Ferias were dangerously enthusiastic. They talked freely to Fitzwilliam of the Queen of Scots and her prospects. They trusted him with letters and presents to her which would secure his admittance to her confidence. Hawkins had sent him over for the single purpose of cheating Philip into releasing his comrades from the Inquisition ; and he had been introduced to secrets of high political moment ; like Saul, the son of Kish, he had gone to seek his father's asses and he had found a kingdom. Fitzwilliam hurried home with his letters and his news. Things were now serious. Hawkins could act no further on his own responsibility. He consulted Cecil. Cecil consulted the Queen, and it was agreed that the practice, as it was called, should be carried further. It might lead to the discovery of the whole secret.

Very treacherous, think some good people. Well, there are times when one admires even treachery—

nec lex est justior ulla
Quam necis artifices arte perire sua.

King Philip was confessedly preparing to encourage an English subject in treason to his sovereign. Was it so wrong to hoist the engineer with his own petard ? Was it wrong of Hamlet to finger the packet of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and rewrite his uncle's despatch ? Let us have done with cant in these matters. Mary Stuart was at Sheffield Castle in charge of Lord Shrewsbury, and Fitzwilliam could not see her without an order from the Crown. Shrewsbury, though loyal to Elizabeth, was notoriously well inclined to Mary, and therefore could not be taken into confidence. In writing to him Cecil merely said that friends of Fitzwilliam's were in prison in Spain ; that if the Queen of Scots would intercede for them, Philip might be induced to let them go. He might therefore allow Fitzwilliam to have a private audience with that Queen.

Thus armed, Fitzwilliam went down to Sheffield. He was introduced. He began with presenting Mary with the letters and remembrances from the Ferias, which at once opened her heart. It was impossible for her to suspect a friend of the duke and duchess. She was delighted at receiving a visitor from the court of Spain. She was prudent enough to avoid dangerous confidences, but she said she was always pleased when she could do a service to Englishmen, and with all her heart would intercede for the prisoners. She wrote to Philip, she wrote to the duke and

duchess, and gave the letters to Fitzwilliam to deliver. He took them to London, called on Don Gerald, and told him of his success. Don Gerald also wrote to his master, wrote unguardedly, and also trusted Fitzwilliam with the despatch.

The various packets were taken first to Cecil, and were next shown to the Queen. They were then returned to Fitzwilliam, who once more went off with them to Madrid. If the letters produced the expected effect, Cecil calmly observed that divers commodities would ensue. English sailors would be released from the Inquisition and the galleys. The enemy's intentions would be discovered. If the King of Spain could be induced to do as Fitzwilliam had suggested, and assist in the repairs of the ships at Plymouth, credit would be obtained for a sum of money which could be employed to his own detriment. If Alva attempted the projected invasion, Hawkins might take the ships as if to escort him, and then do some notable exploit in mid-Channel.

You will observe the downright directness of Cecil, Hawkins, and the other parties in the matter. There is no wrapping up their intentions in fine phrases, no parade of justification. They went straight to their point. It was very characteristic of Englishmen in those stern dangerous times. They looked facts in the face, and did what fact required. All really happened exactly as I have described it : the story is told in letters and documents of the authenticity of which there is not the smallest doubt.

We will follow Fitzwilliam. He arrived at the Spanish Court at the moment when Ridolfi had brought from Rome the Pope's blessing on the conspiracy. The final touches were being added by the Spanish Council of State. All was hope ; all was the credulity of enthusiasm ! Mary Stuart's letter satisfied Philip. The prisoners were dismissed, each with ten dollars in his pocket. An agreement was formally drawn and signed in the Escorial in which Philip gave Hawkins a pardon for his misdemeanours in the West Indies, a patent for a Spanish peerage, and a letter of credit for 40,000*l.* to put the privateers in a condition to do service, and the money was actually paid by Philip's London agent. Admitted as he now was to full confidence, Fitzwilliam learnt all particulars of the great plot. The story reads like a chapter from *Monte Cristo*, and yet it is literally true.

It ends with a letter which I will read to you, from Hawkins to Cecil :—

‘ My very good Lord,—It may please your Honour to be advertised that Fitzwilliam is returned from Spain, where his message

was acceptably received, both by the King himself, the Duke of Feria, and others of the Privy Council. His despatch and answer were with great expedition and great countenance and favour of the King. The Articles are sent to the Ambassador with orders also for the money to be paid to me by him, for the enterprise to proceed with all diligence. The pretence is that my powers should join with the Duke of Alva's powers, which he doth secretly provide in Flanders, as well as with powers which will come with the Duke of Medina Celi out of Spain, and to invade this realm and set up the Queen of Scots. They have practised with us for the burning of Her Majesty's ships. Therefore there should be some good care had of them, but not as it may appear that anything is discovered. The King has sent a ruby of good price to the Queen of Scots, with letters also which in my judgment were good to be delivered. The letters be of no importance, but his message by word is to comfort her, and say that he hath now none other care but to place her in her own. It were good also that Fitzwilliam may have access to the Queen of Scots to render thanks for the delivery of the prisoners who are now at liberty. It will be a very good colour for your Lordship to confer with him more largely.

‘I have sent your Lordship the copy of my pardon from the King of Spain, in the order and manner I have it, with my great titles and honours from the King, from which God deliver me. Their practices be very mischievous, and they be never idle; but God, I hope, will confound them and turn their devices on their own necks.

‘Your Lordship's most faithfully to my power,
‘JOHN HAWKINS.’

A few more words will conclude this curious episode. With the clue obtained by Fitzwilliam, and confessions twisted out of Story and other unwilling witnesses, the Ridolfi conspiracy was unravelled before it broke into act. Norfolk lost his head. The inferior miscreants were hanged. The Queen of Scots had a narrow escape, and the Parliament accentuated the Protestant character of the Church of England by embodying the Thirty-nine Articles in a statute. Alva, who distrusted Ridolfi from the first and disliked encouraging rebellion, refused to interest himself further in Anglo-Catholic plots. Elizabeth and Cecil could now breathe more freely, and read Philip a lesson on the danger of plotting against the lives of sovereigns.

So long as England and Spain were nominally at peace, the presence of De la Mark and his privateer in the Downs was at least indecent. A committee of merchants at Bruges represented that their losses by it amounted (as I said) to three million ducats. Elizabeth being now in comparative safety affected to listen to remonstrances, and orders were sent down to De la Mark that he must prepare to leave. It is likely that both the Queen and he understood each other, and that De la Mark quite well knew where he was to go, and what he was to do.

Alva now held every fortress in the Low Countries, whether inland or on the coast. The people were crushed. The duke's great statue stood in the square at Antwerp as a symbol of the annihilation of the ancient liberties of the Provinces. By sea alone the Prince of Orange still continued the unequal struggle; but if he was to maintain himself as a sea power anywhere, he required a harbour of his own in his own country. Dover and the Thames had served for a time as a base of operations, but it could not last, and without a footing in Holland itself eventual success was impossible. All the Protestant world was interested in his fate, and De la Mark with his miscellaneous gathering of Dutch, English and Huguenot rovers was ready for any desperate exploit.

The order was to leave Dover immediately, but it was not construed strictly. He lingered in the Downs for six weeks. At length, one morning at the end of March 1572, a Spanish convoy known to be richly loaded appeared in the Straits. De la Mark lifted anchor, darted out on it, seized two of the largest hulks, rifled them, flung their crews overboard, and chased the rest up Channel. A day or two after he suddenly showed himself off Brille at the mouth of the Meuse. A boat was sent on shore with a note to the governor, demanding the instant surrender of the town to the admiral of the Prince of Orange. The inhabitants rose in enthusiasm; the garrison was small, and the governor was obliged to comply. De la Mark took possession. A few priests and monks attempted resistance, but were put down without difficulty, and the leaders killed. The churches were cleared of their idols, and the mass replaced by the Calvinistic service. Cannon and stores, furnished from London, were landed, and Brille was made impregnable before Alva had realised what had happened to him. He is said to have torn his beard for anger. Flushing followed suit. In a week or two all the strongest places on the coast had revolted, and the pirate fleet had laid the foundation of

the great Dutch Republic, which at England's side was to strike out of Philip's hand the sceptre of the seas, and to save the Protestant religion.

We may think as we please of these Beggars of the Ocean, these Norse corsairs come to life again with the flavour of Genevan theology in them ; but for daring, for ingenuity, for obstinate determination to be spiritually free or to die for it, the like of the Protestant privateers of the sixteenth century has been rarely met with in this world.

England rang with joy when the news came that Brille was taken. Church bells pealed, and bonfires blazed. Money poured across in streams. Exiled families went back to their homes—which were to be their homes once more—and the Zealanders and Hollanders, entrenched among their ditches, prepared for an amphibious conflict with the greatest power then upon the earth.

Weather-wise.

THIS is a song of the rain,
 That cometh adown when the world is dry,
 And the trees and flowers, in their pain,
 Pray to the heavy sky.

Then sparrows within their eaves
 Call to each other with endless chatter,
 As they hear upon the leaves,
 Beating a kind of marching tune,
 The rustle, and drip, and patter
 Of the strong, warm rain of June ;

While, rugged and void of rhyme,
 From his shelter under the holly
 A blackbird sings, seven notes at a time,
 Hoarding his song as long as he may—
 As if in fear of the folly
 Of giving it all, too soon, away.

The air is heavy and wet,
 But the grey clouds give not a hint of sorrow.
 For a while it is good to forget :
 And after the rest of a rainy day
 The sun has a double debt to pay,
 And shines the brighter—to-morrow.

This is the song of the rain
 That came to me once when the world was dry—
 And I, and the trees, in our pain,
 Prayed to the heavy sky.

EDWARD F. STRANGE.

A Modern Cinderella.

THEY had dined half an hour earlier and had their hair done before dinner, but it was half-past nine, and Glenton was beginning to wish that her young mistresses would come upstairs to dress. They were going to Mrs. Glendinning's masked ball at the Neville Rooms, and their pretty white dresses, which Glenton had only just finished, were lying ready on the bed. There was to be no great variety of costume at this ball, disguise apparently being the main condition to be observed, and Mrs. Glendinning seemed to have made up her mind that disguise was best obtained by making all the women dress alike. They were to wear plainly-made white silk dresses, black silk dominoes, and large-sized masks. Glenton knew that the two white dresses that she had made did her credit, but as she surveyed them while waiting for the girls, who were so long in coming, she felt in her heart her talents had in this instance been thrown away, for almost any maid worthy of the name could have run up a dress that was good enough to wear under a black domino. She had put all her art into them, and it was scarcely fair of their intended wearers not to come up early enough to give her time to dress them so as to look like young ladies who had a good maid.

While thoughts such as these were traversing her mind, in came Miss Dorothy Delaney, looking altogether disconcerted.

'You may put those dresses away, Glenton,' she said almost tearfully. 'We are not to go to the masked ball, but to the Reltons' dance instead. Papa insists on it. We all thought that he knew about our having to go in dominoes and masks, and supposed that he didn't mind it, as Mrs. Glendinning is such a very, very careful and particular person, and his own cousin too; but he declares that we must have told him about it when he was half asleep, for if he had understood that it was a masked ball, not for one moment would he have given his consent to anything so improper. We have been trying to persuade him to let us go, but it's no use, so there's an end of all our pleasure.'

'O Miss Dorothy! and after the pains I have taken with those pretty white silks, and when you and Miss Alice do look so nice in them! It would just vex a saint!'

'It vexes a sinner, I assure you,' said Miss Dolly; 'but it can't be helped. I have said everything that can be said, and so has mamma, but he won't let us go, so you may put those dresses away, for we can't go in spite of him, more's the pity. There is no way of doing that.'

Alice came in time to hear what Dolly was saying, and exclaimed—

'Don't order those dresses to be put away, Dolly. Why shouldn't we wear them at the Reltons'? And as for our not being able to go to the masked ball in spite of papa, that's just what we could do, if we were not going somewhere else with mamma, and were naughty girls who didn't mind stealing off to the Neville Rooms without her knowing; for, as everyone is to be closely masked, no one would ever find out that we had been there.'

Glenton, who was quietly putting the dominoes, masks, and other things that were not wanted out of the way, and getting out other things that were, paused in what she was doing, and appeared to take some interest in this speech.

Dorothy sighed, and then, having a fine, deeply-seated conviction that, as servants belonged to an entirely different world from her own, it did not in the least signify what she said before them, for they could not possibly understand it, and it would not much matter if they did, she burst into tears and threw her arms round her sister's neck, exclaiming—

'And after what happened to-day, too, just when I did so want to put things a little straight! O Alice! if you only knew how miserable I feel!'

Alice, who saw signs of interest in Glenton's eyes, though she still appeared to be giving her mind to what she was doing, did not at all approve of taking her into their confidence, and answered in French, 'Miserable because you can't go where Cosmo Clare is, because you want to put things straight! You have not sense enough to put anything straight; you would be much more likely to make it ever so much crookeder than it was before. Why, if mamma were to go to the Neville Rooms to-night, and you were to dance every dance with him, you would just behave as you always do.'

'How do I always behave?'

‘Like an absolute idiot, my child. Considering how you love that man your folly is simply stupendous.’

‘I am afraid it is.’

‘I know it is. I don’t know whether you do it from pure stupidity or from nervousness, but no sooner does he show any sign of being in love with you than you turn stiff and cold, and freeze him up in a single second.’

‘I know, I know; and it is a great deal more true than you think. I am quite certain that he would have proposed to me this very day if I had not said something so awkward, and so discouraging—so dreadfully unkind and stupid, in fact—that I am half afraid he will never want to say anything of the same kind to me again.’

‘But why did you? Why on earth couldn’t you for once keep your silly little wits about you?’

Dolly shook her head drearily. ‘I don’t know; I can’t explain it. I like him far better than I ever liked anyone else, and yet whenever he begins to speak like that something comes over me in a moment, and I feel as if the one wish of my heart was to get him to hold his tongue.’

‘And you naturally succeed, my dear.’

‘Yes, and then I am miserable.’

‘And three or four kind words would have put all right when he was here.’

‘Yes, and I knew it, and could not say them. Not those gloves, Glenton; I want to wear tan.’

‘It is a very bad thing to be a fool,’ said Alice; ‘but it did not sound so bad in French as it does in English.’

‘I know it is,’ replied Dolly meekly. ‘I love Cosmo Clare, and I treat him just as if I hated him. Alice, we have our white dresses on; we have nothing to do but put on masks and dominoes. You might run to mamma’s room again, like a darling, and just explain things a little to her, and get her to go and persuade papa to let us go just this once.’

‘It would do no good; he has a horror of masked balls.’

‘Oh, but you might ask mamma to try—’

‘No, dear, no. You must see for yourself that she can do nothing; besides, she would rather you married Sir Edward Deepdene.’

‘But I won’t.’

‘Oh, I don’t know! Judging from the way you go on, you are much more likely to marry a man you don’t like than one you do.’

'I shall never marry anyone,' said Dolly, with a sudden relapse into despair.

'I dare say you won't. You certainly won't if you are allowed to go on managing your own affairs. They ought to be taken out of your hands. After all Cosmo Clare may be at the Reltons', and if he is why not make a great effort to behave sensibly?'

'But he won't be there—that's the worst of it! He thinks that we are going to the Neville Rooms—I told him we were. It was when I was arranging those anemones from Cannes. He asked me to wear some of them, and give him one or two to wear too, so that we might recognise each other.'

'And you of course said, "Why should we recognise each other?"'

'How do you know? Who told you?' asked Dolly in amazement.

Alice laughed and said, 'Ich kenne meine Pappenheimer.' O Dolly! why are you such a goose? Well, such as you are, get dressed quickly. We have not much time. Oh, what a sigh! Cheer up. There are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it.'

'That's nonsense, Alice, because there must always be one best fish somewhere, and when one thinks one has found out where it is, and has set one's heart on it—'

'You must do more than that; you must have some sense. But dress, child, dress.'

So they did dress, and neither was too much affected by disappointment to attend to the matter in hand.

'That will do!' exclaimed Alice, after she had carefully inspected her own image in the glass. 'And you look very nice too, Dolly. Say I look well, there's a darling.'

'You look lovely; you always do.'

'That's right; then I think I will go down and say you are coming.'

'And now, Glenton, you can attend a little to me,' said Dolly. She never got much attention until Alice was dressed.

'What shall you do while we are away? By-the-bye, mamma said I was to tell you that we should not be a minute later than one. I feel sorry to think of the long lonely time you will have while we are away, and you scarcely ever get a whole night's rest. Do try to do something that will make you comfortable. Have you a book?'

'Not here, Miss Dorothy, but there is one lying open on your

dressing table that I was just thinking I should like to read, if I might.'

'But that is a French book. If you can read that you must have understood every word my sister and I have been saying.'

'Oh, no, Miss Dorothy, I didn't. I didn't really. I might, perhaps, have understood a great deal of it if I hadn't been moving about all the time, putting things away and getting other things out as fast as I could; but as I was doing that, and had to fix my mind on my work, I only caught a word now and then, that was all.'

'But, Glenton, I really must say it was not quite fair of you not to warn us that you understood.'

'Miss Dorothy, you knew that I had received my education at a tolerably good school; that, of course, means some French, and Mrs. Delaney knew that I had spent two winters in the South of France with my last ladies.'

'You have spent two winters in the South of France, Glenton? How I do envy you!'

'You need not envy me, miss. If you kneel down on your bedroom floor, and put your head into one of your big trunks, you will see about as much of the South of France as ever I saw. It was pack, pack, pack for ever, and ever, and ever for me. My ladies drove about and saw the sights of the town, and got done with them nearly always in one day, and moved on to the next place, and I lived with my head in their trunks, unpacking them and packing them again nearly every day of my life. That was my enjoyment of foreign towns and scenery, and most maids will tell you much the same; but I did pick up some of the language, and to-night, when you were talking, I did think that perhaps I ought to ask you to speak German when you were saying anything you did not wish me to understand.'

'We will, Glenton, but I still think that you ought to have said you knew some French.'

'Don't reproach me, Miss Dorothy. Take my word for it that you shall never be worse for anything I have heard.'

'Well, I must trust you, Glenton, but do be careful not to repeat anything; and take the French book, as you can read it, and sit down by the fire and do your best to be comfortable. You can go to sleep if you like, of course. Now I must be off; there's the bell: the carriage has come round.'

'Oh, dear! oh, dear!' thought Glenton, 'girls are funny things! There they go. They are just my own age, not any-

thing like so clever as I am, and I don't fancy much better looking, if any, and they seem to think that it will make me quite happy to sit by their fireside for two hours quite alone and yawning over one of their dull books. For once it is a French novel. I wonder they did not insist on my amusing myself with some old story-book they had in their nursery. It's just too funny for anything. Well, Miss Alice did say one sensible thing before she went out, and that was that it was a shame those two tickets for the masked ball should be wasted. I quite agree with her there, and it shall be my duty and pleasure now to see that one of them, at all events, is put to a good use. Let me see, it is ten minutes past ten ; I can soon fling on a dress, and easily be at the Rooms by eleven. I shall not have much more than an hour and a half of it, but that will be a thousand times more amusing than sitting here by this fire.'

She hastily arranged the bedroom ; then she went to the servants' hall, and declined, on the plea of a headache, the supper that they had kept warm for her. 'I shall rest for an hour or two, I think,' she said ; 'I shall not be wanted till one o'clock.' Then she went into the deserted morning room and took a ticket for the ball from the rack. Other tickets for that evening were there which she might have used, but this ball was the thing she most fancied. She skipped joyfully upstairs with the ticket in her hand, saying to herself, 'And now my turn for a little enjoyment has come ! What do young ladies think young servants are made of ? I don't suppose I shall have enough to hurt me much ; it will be a bare two hours. Sit down by the fire and rest, indeed, when I can put on a dress that will cost me nothing, and wear a mask that will disguise me so completely that even Miss Alice, sharp as the poor young woman thinks herself, could not recognise me ; as for Miss Dolly, she has no eyes for anything but her own stupid little love troubles.'

Then Glenton got out a white silk dress of Miss Dolly's that was not by any means in the first flower of its youth, but had much creditable wear in it. She knew that it would fit her, because her figure was very like Miss Dorothy's, and she had a still better reason for her confidence, for she had worn this same dress before, and it had fitted her like a well-made glove. 'I will take these shoes,' she thought ; 'they are not quite so clean as I should like, but I will make them do, and these gloves. It is a shame of Miss Alice not to get them a button or two longer.'

She took Alice's gloves, but she was careful to take one of

Miss Dolly's fans, and no ornaments that did not belong to her. Then, armed with her young ladies' little gold latch-key, which they had not taken because their father had his own key with him, and having carefully secured her mask, she flung over her the domino that had been bought for Miss Alice, and began to go cautiously downstairs. No one was about, and she had no fear. On her way, however, she had a lucky inspiration, and turned into the drawing-room for some anemones to make a small bouquet for the front of her dress, and then pursued her way noiselessly into the hall.

‘It is hard lines on my poor shoes, leastways on Miss Dorothy’s,’ she thought, as she looked down on her pretty little embroidered white slippers, ‘but I can’t help it, for I dare not get a cab in any other way than by walking to it.’ It was a fine night fortunately, and in less than three minutes she got a hansom, and in less than ten after leaving the house was at the Neville Rooms. ‘Now, thank goodness!’ she thought, ‘I am as good a lady as any here, and no one will trouble about me unless, perhaps, Mr. Cosmo Clare does, and if he chooses to take me for Miss Dorothy, I have half a mind to see if I can’t get a bit of fun out of him.’

She neither hoped nor feared that this would be the case. She had come for pure pleasure, and meant to have it somehow. She thought it by no means improbable that he would mistake her for Miss Dorothy, for her fellow-servants had frequently done so when they had met her on the stairs or in the passages in a doubtful light, and they had always said that her figure was very like that of her young mistress. She had no particular intention with regard to Mr. Cosmo Clare, though when she had placed the anemones in her dress the thought had been in her mind that it would be very amusing if she could in some way, without betraying herself, put matters right between Miss Dorothy and him.

She followed a stout lady who was not unlike Mrs. Delaney upstairs, and seated herself by her and her daughter. ‘Not that my being alone matters,’ she thought, ‘for who can say that I am not an old married lady who can go about as she likes?’

She danced twice, and then began to wonder why she did not recognise Mr. Clare.

She almost felt disappointed that she did not do so. She had not heard what costume he was to wear, and did not know what to look out for. It was twenty minutes to twelve, and ere long she would have to go. So she put her anemones where they could be seen, and took three or four from the bunch and held them

loosely in her hand as she stood up to watch the dancers. The spirit of adventure had taken possession of her. Before five minutes had gone by a Puritan with long Genevan gown and white bands, but, like everyone else, closely masked, seemed to be a good deal interested in the fact that she was not only wearing anemones from the Riviera, but carrying enough for a button-hole in her hand. He looked earnestly at her, and at the flowers, and stood some time near her. She was again only one seat from the lady who resembled Mrs. Delaney, to whom for that reason she had attached herself on arrival.

‘Will you dance this valse with me?’ he said. She was almost certain that he was Mr. Clare.

‘With pleasure,’ she said in the assumed voice in which she had spoken ever since she had entered the room. Why she scarcely knew then, except that she had gathered from the novels which were her principal reading that it was the custom to speak in an assumed voice at a masked ball. Now it was really necessary.

‘You have some anemones in your hand,’ he said as if wanting to be helped out of a difficulty.

‘Yes,’ she answered, hoping that he would ask more.

‘I wonder why you trouble to carry them.’

‘Partly as a penance,’ she said; ‘some one asked me this morning to give him three or four to wear to-night, and I refused. I can’t think why, for I wanted him to have them.’

‘Ah, I thought I had divined you even in your shroudings of black; my instinct led me to you. Will you give them to me now?’

‘Let me be sure that you are the right person; where was I when I refused them?’

‘At the far end of a big drawing-room in Chester Terrace, Hyde Park. I begged you to give me one or two, and you were—’

‘Oh, don’t say what I was, and don’t always judge me by what I say! I never can say what I mean, or wish.’

‘Is that true?’

‘It is quite true.’

‘Do you never say what you mean or wish?’

‘Very seldom! I am so shy. I might perhaps say what I mean now that I am masked, and no one can see how I look while I am saying it.’

‘There is a question which affects the happiness of my whole life; for weeks and months I have wished to put it to you. I

have tried once or twice, but I never even approach it without your manner becoming so discouraging, and your words so repelling, that I see it is of no use to say more.'

'What is the question?' she demanded with an admirably ingenuous manner.

'Can't you guess?'

'I don't know. Perhaps I can, but I seem to like you to put it.'

'I do put it. Will you be my wife?'

There was a brief pause, and then for sole answer she put the four little anemones in his hand.

'Say you will,' he pleaded.

'I will.'

'Good heavens! And you did make me so miserable this morning, and I have been so miserable ever since.'

'You are sure you love me?' she asked almost in a whisper. Even though this offer was not meant for her she was too much affected by his words and manner to be able to answer him in an assumed voice now.

'Of course I am! I never was so sure of anything in my whole life! I only wish I were as sure of your loving me. Once or twice during the past two months you have looked as if you did care for me just a little, and then the next moment you have chilled me into silence and hopelessness. Even now I feel as if I scarcely dared to trust in such happiness. I feel as if it would fade away and leave me, and that to-morrow, when I see you again, you will look frightened and hesitate, and when you do open your lips it will be to say, "I can't think what you mean; I am quite certain that I never said I loved you; how could I say such a thing?" In a modified form that is how you have treated me for some months.'

'I know it is, and it has made me quite as unhappy as it can possibly have made you. It is something that I can neither control nor alter that makes me behave as I do, and whenever you seem to like me most, and I am most happy, I play the fool and say something to drive you away. I warn you that I shall perhaps do it again; it is quite possible that when you next come to see me I shall deny that I have owned I love you.'

'Oh! impossible!'

'Not impossible at all. From what I know of myself I think it is almost certain; I am afraid of its happening—so afraid that I do so wish there was some way of defending me against myself.'

'Forewarned is forearmed ; I shall refuse to believe you ; besides, I think I will make sure of you by going to speak to your father about this to-morrow morning, and I shall not trouble you, dear, with any further expression of opinion.'

'That is much the best way,' she murmured softly. 'That's how I like it. I do love you, and that is enough. You say that you intend to see my father to-morrow ?'

'Yes, to-morrow, and as early as I can with propriety present myself.'

'Then afterwards, when you come to see me—for my father likes you, and is sure to say "Yes" and send you on to me—shall I tell you how I should like you to behave ? I don't want you to say one word about anything that we have said to-night ; just come into the room and say, "I have been to tell your father that I love you, and now I have come to tell you that he says I may."'

'And you ?'

'And I ! Well, you will see. I may be as shy as ever when daylight comes and I have no mask on to hide my face ; but don't let anything I say or do make you for one moment believe that I don't love you, for I do ; so if anything goes wrong it will be your own fault.'

'Nothing shall go wrong. I will make you say you love me again, and you will say it.'

'Oh, yes, I shall say it sooner or later ; but do remember your promise not to say a word about having seen me here to-night, either to me or to my father.'

'It is quite easy to keep that promise so far as your father is concerned, but it is rather hard to be forbidden to talk to you about it when it is the beginning and cause of all our happiness. Why mayn't I ? Do let me—you will, I am sure.'

'Oh, no ; for Heaven's sake don't name it. Promise me you won't. I will explain why it is so important that you shouldn't. I didn't want to tell you, but I am afraid I must. Just as we were going upstairs after dinner to dress papa found out that this was a masked ball, and positively forbade us to go to it. We had told him that it was before, but he had forgotten.'

'And you came !'

'Yes, it was awfully wrong, of course, but I knew that you were coming, and I had been so unkind to you, and I did so want to come ; so, as papa was going somewhere else first, we made mamma bring us just for one hour or so. Now I think you will see that you must never breathe a word about having seen me

here to a single soul—not even to me myself when we are alone together, for if it is spoken of at all it will be sure to come out, and poor dear mamma will get into dreadful trouble ; you don't know what papa is like when he is really angry.'

'I see, I see ; I quite understand. How glad I am that you have told me ! Wild horses shall not make me name it even to you.'

'Thank you. Now I must go back to mamma. It was not her fault in the least, I ought to tell you ; we teased her until she really did not know what she was doing. She is there on the far ottoman. For Heaven's sake don't seem to recognise her ; she is in an awful fright about what she has done, and would much rather not be spoken to. She has not recognised you, so there's no need to do it.'

'But won't you give me one more dance ?'

'I am sorry to say I can't, for we are going on to the Reltons' almost immediately ; papa is to join us there.'

She repented having said this at once, for he exclaimed, 'Then I'll go to the Reltons' too !'

'Oh, will you ?'

'Yes, indeed I will, for I shall see you there, and be able to look on your face once more.'

'Yes, no doubt,' she said anxiously, 'but I don't want you to speak to me there.'

'What ! are you reassuming your old manner already ?'

'No, oh, no ! I joyfully abide by the words which I have spoken, but if I see you at the Reltons' I can't let you say more than a certain number of words to me. Just wait till I count and I will tell you how many. You may say thirteen words to me, and I will tell you what they are to be.'

'Oh, let me choose them for myself.'

'No, I shall choose them, and you are to have no power to add to their number. Give me your word of honour not to do that.'

'I will, but give me your reason for asking this. I must say that your ordinances are excessively severe.'

'It is this,' she said nervously, for she was beginning to feel almost at the end of her resources ; 'it is only this : The last hour has been a very exciting one to me ; if you came and talked to me at the Reltons' I should break down.'

'I won't, dear, I won't ! Tell me what I may say, and I will say no more.'

'You may just approach me long enough to say, "I am going

to see your father to-morrow to say something about you," and without saying another word, or waiting for one from me, you are to pass on.'

'All right. You shall be obeyed.'

'No matter what I may say or do! Remember, even if I speak to you, you are to say no more.'

'You may say and do what you like; you will not wring another word from me; but I do wonder why you have chosen those particular thirteen words; they are just what I have said here. Invent something new.'

'Can't you understand that I want to have the happiness of knowing that you love me as much at the Reltons' as you did when you said them here?'

'Darling, how could I do otherwise?' he exclaimed enthusiastically, and she thought, 'There, I have arranged so that he will use words to Miss Dorothy which will pass for an offer!'

Then she sighed and said, 'Now you had better go. I have only to take off my mask and domino, and then I am ready for the other party, but you have more to do.'

'Not I! A Genevan gown can cover a multitude of dress clothes! I shall go straight there.'

She returned to her supposed mother, and he departed. She found some question to ask the old lady in case he should be watching her from afar, but he went, and before long the chaperon arose, collected her daughter, and left. Glenton followed her downstairs, and boldly went out into the street with her, found herself a cab, and bade the man drive quickly, for it was now after one. Even then she did not dare to take her cab up to the Delaneys' door, lest she should be heard or seen;

So three doors off the chaise was stayed,

and she got out.

How late she was, and how terrified, for as she alighted from her cab she saw a carriage, which was in all probability the Delaneys', entering the short street in which they lived! If they reached the house first they would let themselves in with their latch-key and bolt her out! If on this particular occasion her latch-key was not as manageable in her hands as was usually the case they would find her struggling with it when they alighted. She gathered up her white silk dress and ran. In her haste she dropped one of her white satin slippers, but did not dare to stop to pick it up. Key in hand, she scrambled up the steps somehow,

and was then hidden by the portico. Happily for her, the key worked smoothly in spite of her trembling fingers, and in another minute she was inside the house and the door was shut just as the carriage stopped outside. She flew upstairs to her own room to put on her ordinary apparel. Never again, unless she should happen to have to marry Miss Alice, must she venture to cut it so fine.

The white satin slipper, which might have been her ruin, saved her. It delayed them.

‘What is that lying at the bottom of the steps?’ exclaimed Alice as soon as she got out of the carriage. ‘Why, I do believe it is a white satin slipper! Anybody would say that there had been a wedding here since we went away.’

‘What absurd nonsense you do talk!’ said her father, who was tired, having been standing in the Reltons’ crowded rooms for two hours and a half, and who had a steadfast conviction that girls talked and thought of nothing else but matrimony.

‘But it is a white satin slipper,’ maintained Alice. ‘Pick it up, Dolly, and let us have a look at it.’ Alice always liked other people to do the active duties of life for her.

‘I do declare it is my shoe!’ said Dolly as soon as she had it in her hand and saw the embroidery on it. ‘What a very curious thing!’

‘What nonsense you do talk, Dolly! Why is it so curious?’ said Alice impatiently. ‘I suppose it got caught in your dress somehow or other, and you dropped it when you came out. What a lucky thing it is that you are the one to find it!’

‘You mean that it is lucky for anyone to find a white shoe?’ said Dolly dreamily. She was in a mood to find luck and happiness in everything.

‘Don’t be silly, Dolly!’ said Alice—‘lucky if you don’t want to have your pair spoiled.’

‘It has got rather dirty outside here,’ said Dolly, who was brought down at last to common earth.

‘Come, girls, go in, and take your precious shoe with you,’ cried Mr. Delaney, and having obtained a hearing he shut the door. There were a number of letters and invitations lying on the hall table, and each girl gathered up her own letters and took an interest in the invitations, and then turned into the drawing-room to sip a little Apollinaris, so that when they reached their bedroom Glenton had quite easily been able to get there before them, arrayed in the apparel her service demanded.

Dolly had [the white satin slipper in her hand, and held it out, saying, 'Look, Glenton, what I have found lying outside our door on the steps.'

Glenton seemed amazed, and said, 'On the steps outside? Good gracious me, Miss Dorothy, what a very singular thing! How could a shoe have possibly got there? That's one of the pair that I laid out for you when I thought you were only going to the masked ball, and when I wanted to put them away I could only find one! If I haven't sought that shoe both high and low!'

'It must have got caught in one of our dresses somehow,' said Alice calmly.

'I suppose so,' remarked Glenton thoughtfully. 'Indeed, what other way is there of accounting for it?' and then she did her best to conceal a yawn which had no existence.

'You are tired, Glenton,' said Dolly kindly.

'Oh no, miss, thank you, not so very tired.'

'You *are* a good soul, Glenton! You sit up till any hour we like and never say you are tired.'

'Oh, I shouldn't like to do that, miss. Have you had a pleasant party?'

There was no need to ask the question, for the girl looked simply radiant.

'Very pleasant, thank you. It was delightful.'

'Then you didn't regret Mrs. Glendinning's ball, miss?'

'Well, no; I do not think I did.'

'Dolly,' said Alice in French (she did not know that Glenton understood it), 'now that at last we are alone, what was it that Cosmo Clare said when he met you on the stairs as we were leaving?'

'He said, "I am going to see your father to-morrow to say something about you,"' replied Dolly in the same language.

'Rather a cool, taking-it-all-for-granted kind of thing to say and do; but you know best, Dolly.'

'No, he is the one who knows what's best. I think he has at last learnt to understand me and my ways,' said Dolly, 'and I am awfully glad he said that, and I shall be still more glad when he does it.'

'So, my dear little Dolly, you have at last managed to get your "great big, best fish" pulled out of the water.'

'Yes, at last!' said Dolly, with a deep sigh of satisfaction, 'but I can't imagine how it happened.'

'I can,' thought Glenton. 'Ah, well! We had an awfully

stupid reading-book at school, with a lot in it about poor cormorants being made to fish with leather thongs tightly buckled round their throats, lest they swallowed the fish they caught. I have been a cormorant and have done some good fishing of that kind to-night. I shall be glad to go to bed. One doesn't play the very polite, shy young drawing-room miss for a whole hour, or act such a difficult part as I have had to play to-night, without fatigue, and perhaps not without a touch of something else.' Then she turned to her young mistresses and said 'Good night, Miss Alice, if you are quite sure that I can do no more for you. I am very glad you have had such a pleasant evening, Miss Dorothy, and so glad you did not lose your shoe!'

MARGARET HUNT.

Unter den Linden.

You have said ; but whether wisely or no, let the forest judge.
As You Like It, act iii. sc. 2.

IT is a gay and bright scene : flashing swords and uniforms ; equipages ; children and dogs ; old age resting in the sunshine ; gossiping friends and whispering lovers beneath the trees—and all this set in a wealth of colour and animation which far transcends the monotony of London Parks even when crowded. Englishmen have not reduced the art of loitering to a dignified waste of time as on the Continent. They are much happier when doing nothing, to be doing it in earnest. Here and there, indeed, a gallant major, or a young fellow with a competency, has condensed laziness into a fine art, but they are the exceptions. It needs to be born with an aptitude for idling gracefully. In France, and much more in Italy, the feeling comes unsought.

Beautiful as is the walk at Berlin *Unter den Linden*, a more characteristic lime avenue may be found on the Borders. The enchanted river of Scotch song and legend streams round, the pale yellow lights of autumn flit about it and harmoniously lead the eye to soft blue mountains beyond. Each sigh of the dying year shakes off handfuls of dry leaves from overhead, while the foot sinks gratefully into a crisp carpet ; the tall grey stems above stretch out ghostly boughs denuded of their annual gold. An old-fashioned house, with an embattled wall surrounding it, presents itself at the termination of the avenue. Together with Warrender, Grandtully, and Old Ravelston, Cardrona is said to have supplied features which Scott worked up in the Baron of Bradwardine's house. Its avenue, however, consisted of a double row of ancient horse-chestnuts and sycamores ; the limes here are of uncommon majesty and regular growth. Their owner in the beginning of the century was a Mr. Williamson, a humourist, and as such a great friend of Scott. The poet must often have walked here over the rustling leaves of long-vanished autumns. Every

lover of Scott looks with interest upon all that found favour in his sight. These lime leaves had each its own story for him, like the prophetic leaves on which the Sibyl wrote her oracles. The lime is a tree of Northern Europe, truly indigenous, in all probability, in the South of England. There are several large-leaved varieties, but the smaller the leaf, the nearer is the tree to the native species. It is a tree much planted and universally approved. For avenues it is unrivalled when well grown, the form of each tree and the free mode in which the arms are flung out are striking even in winter, while the lovely light-green foliage is a perpetual refreshment to the eye. It is a safe avenue tree too ; its boughs will not all at once, as with the elm, snap off and kill anything beneath them. Three times every summer it possesses peculiar beauty—when the young leaves are just breaking forth ; when it is hung with fragrant yellow flowers, round which innumerable bees hum ; and in autumn, when its leaves change very early into pale shades of yellow. Decay comes at last, but even then the lime parts with life bough by bough, and with the dignity of a venerable old age, whereas the elm falls in a mass and leaves unsightly gaps in an avenue.

On the other hand, the bulk of well-grown elms endears them to a quantity of tree-loving birds. The woodpeckers, especially the smaller and larger spotted varieties, work up and down the boles, and utter that curious drumming sound which once heard can never be forgotten. The wryneck loves the higher branches ; the tree-creeper feebly flies to the lowest bough and crawls about the bark, up and down, as happens. Stock-doves and wood-pigeons breed each spring in the masses of ivy which accumulate round time-honoured elms. Jackdaws find holes high up in the same elms, where branches have been broken off, and in the summer twilight the nightjars emit their singular cracking sounds, produced probably by striking the wings together. Where, too, should the first spring thrush sing but high up in the windy branches of the purpled elm ? With all these associations, the lime is still to be preferred as an avenue tree. Elms were largely planted at the Restoration. Few of these probably survive, as the elm is by no means a long-lived tree. The elms in the Great Park at Windsor and in Christ Church Meadows at Oxford flourish in many a memory, while some very fine specimen trees of the elm, of great girth and spread of shade, may be found in Herefordshire. The two which used to grow inside Ross Church in that county, in the seat of 'The Man of Ross,' are now dead.

For an artistic appreciation of the beauty of trees the reader must be directed to the works of Gilpin and Uvedale Price. Mr. Ruskin, taking up the subject where they end, adds much teaching on the moral uses of trees. Who can forget the many eloquent passages which light up the pages of the *Modern Painters*? How beautifully is the preference of the old Greek for the useful rather than the ornamental tree reprehended, or the pensive feelings evoked by autumn leaves utilised for higher lessons, that we, 'careless of monument by the grave, may build it in the world—monument by which men may be taught to remember, not where we died but where we lived !'¹ It is impossible to write of trees without being indebted to their modern hierophant, and equally impossible to forget the fervour of his fine passage on the peacefulness of modern life among the trees compared with the harshness of mediæval times. He who does not know the following will be grateful for its introduction. Just as Lamb suggests that a deep melody on the organ should be played before reading Milton, so, before contemplating tree beauty, Mr. Ruskin's pathos should ever be borne in mind. 'The whole of nature only shone hitherto for man between the tossing of helmet-crests ; and sometimes I cannot but think of the trees of the earth as capable of a kind of sorrow, in that imperfect life of theirs, as they spread their innocent leaves in the warm spring-time in vain for men ; and all along the dells of England her beeches cast their dappled shade only where the outlaw drew his bow and the king rode his careless chase ; and by the sweet French rivers their long ranks of poplars waved in the twilight only to show the flames of burning cities on the horizon through the tracerie of their stems ; amidst the fair defiles of the Apennines the twisted olive branches hid their ambushes of treachery ; and on their valley-meadows, day by day, the lilies which were white at the dawn were washed with crimson at sunset.' Superficial observers draw most of their moral lessons from the steadfastness of the oak. This is a great mistake ; the willow, so often despised and maltreated, furnishes many more. That it is the most graceful of all English trees has been excellently pointed out, but its adaptability to its situation—the manner in which it yields to storm or flood and quickly recovers itself, like the Eternal City, *merses profundo pulchrior evenit*—its patient endurance under the hedge-cutter's axe, its readiness to grow, and the useful character of its wood, alike for thatching the cottager's rick or

¹ *Modern Painters*, vol. v., pp. 79, 70.

providing leisure with cricket bats, the value of its active principle salicine as a febrifuge, the feast it spreads for bees during spring ; even the beauty of its roots, with their bright pink rootlets seen through the amber water of a Welsh river—all these excellences of the humble willow are seldom pointed out. Common trees, like lowly lives, are full of profit to the thoughtful.

The lover of trees derives singular pleasure from realising their gradual spread over the country. Omitting the *algæ* and *lycodiaceæ*, the earliest plant markings in the rocks, and passing over the extreme development of the cycads and pines in the oolite and chalk, the bulk of our common trees did not appear till kainozoic times, most of them, indeed, not flushing into full vigour before quite recent days. At present, acclimatisation brings together the rarest trees and shrubs from the ends of the earth. When Cæsar visited Britain he found the timber much the same as in France, with the addition of the beech and pine. The former tree seems indigenous, at least in the dry districts of central England ; the existence of the latter is testified by recent geological evidence. Besides these, the oak, yew, hazel, alder, wych elm, holly, birch, and elder are unquestionably native, as still may be seen in a careful study of the hedgerows and copses of Wales and parts of Herefordshire. So the face of the country remained from the appearance of man in England until the coming of the Romans. To them are due the elm, the Spanish chestnut, large-leaved lime, cherry, and other fruit trees. They also introduced the custom of grafting, and, by what might be seen around their villas, spread far and wide a taste for gardening. The Cistercians, in much later times, were excellent gardeners, and by their agency a supply of the best Continental apples and pears was introduced to their monasteries, and thence overflowed to the world outside. Abbey Dore, in the Golden Valley, is bosomed every spring in clouds of apple-blossom, and it is probable that the habit of cultivating apples there, if not some of the kinds themselves, was derived from these worthy monks. Some have contended that orchards were first planted in England at Buckland, in Devon, where a celebrated Cistercian abbey existed ; but the Norman abbots of Montburg, it seems, had already introduced apple-orchards in their manor of Axmouth ; and cider, as early as 1286, was the common drink of their labourers. Hence *colligere poma ad siseram faciendam* was an ordinary service.¹ At the other end of England, in the same manner, Jedburgh Abbey was famous

¹ Oliver's *Monasticon Diaecesis Exon.* p. 382.

for its pears. The time of the Crusades was another epoch when useful herbs and trees were introduced.

Omitting Philips's poem on cider, which necessarily treats of fruit trees, the poet of all others who discriminates trees and cleverly describes each in some well-turned phrase is unquestionably Cowper. And none but a born poet could successfully deal with woodland subjects when presented with 'The Sofa' as a subject for verse. Undauntedly he proceeds :

No tree in all the grove but has its charms,
Though each its hue peculiar ; paler some
And of a wannish gray ; the willow such,
And poplar that with silver lines his leaf.

And continues—

Some glossy-leaved and shining in the sun,
The maple and the beech, of oily nuts
Prolific, and the lime at dewy eve
Diffusing odours.

Scott and Wordsworth in like manner were true lovers and painters of 'Nature's old felicities,' and certainly did not forget trees. Much of the poetry of trees may be found in Evelyn's *Sylva*. It is singular to find him rising superior to a superstition which still lingers in remote parts of England : 'that a forked twig of hazel should move when held over confined water or a vein of mineral, is a thing not to be believed.' Gilpin is remarkably unjust in his judgments on the beech, one of the most graceful trees of the forest, perhaps only excelled in lightness and elegance by the birch. Its bushy character, he thinks, gives a great heaviness to the tree. Most men would regard it as having a peculiarly airy character ; but, he continues, 'even what lightness it has, disgusts,' its lighter branches being seldom in harmony with the tree. Except in autumn, the beech, it may be granted, is not a tree to be seen in large numbers. There is then something close and sombre about it ; but October's frosts kindle a glory all along a row of them, short-lived, it is true, but a glory that, while it lasts, positively irradiates the country.

The diseases to which trees are subject are endless. Evelyn, following Pliny, gives a tremendous list of those which are due to atmospheric causes and insects, and every tree-grower will agree with him. Even at the present day little is known of the pathology and cure of these. Thus it is a general article of belief

that if the bark of a tree be ringed or taken off all round, the tree dies. Dr. Plot and Evelyn both comment on a singular case of this kind which happened to an elm in the grounds of Magdalen College, Oxford. It was entirely disbarked, but flourished afterwards as well as ever. We can corroborate this instance by a precisely similar case, where a very large elm was entirely disbarked by colts, from the ground to some six feet above. The tree was freely painted with tar, and has since flourished, apparently unimpaired, for a decade, when at first it appeared a hopeless case.

Landscape-gardeners always oppose nature to picturesqueness, the latter quality being in their eyes something superadded to nature. Deformity of growth, and even dead limbs in a tree—especially if to a certain extent shrouded in ivy—greatly aid picturesqueness. Thus disease in trees is by no means inimical to what may be called artificial beauty. Natural tree beauty consists, according to Gilpin, in form, proper balance, and lightness; and he is good enough to add that Nature's works, and all her works, must ever in some degree be beautiful. Still, in the era of Brown, Kent, and Vanbrugh, it was an artistic duty to cut down Nature's works where they were luxuriant, or where they seemed to conflict with the artificial theory of beauty which they had resolved to uphold. 'It is in the arrangement and management of trees,' says one of the fraternity, 'that the great art of improvement consists.' Nature had an evil time at the end of last century; copses were levelled, bushy trees trimmed into the picturesque, hills smoothed, and valleys filled up. All the artificiality and pompous pretensions of the eighteenth century culminated in the barbarous treatment of what was then called a prospect. It left the landscape-gardener's hands an entirely different scene from what boon Nature had originally created.¹

Some trees and woods possess an individuality which always ensures them a place in a tree-lover's memory. Strange thoughts crowd upon the traveller when he looks at the twin gnarled specimens of larches in the Duchess of Athole's grounds at Dunkeld. These tall, gaunt, and unsightly trees are the first larches ever planted in Scotland, the parents of the millions which

¹ T. L. Peacock, in *Headlong Hall*, has cleverly intimated this in his character of Mr. Milestone, 'a picturesque landscape-gardener of the first celebrity, who was not without hopes of persuading Squire Headlong to put his romantic pleasure-grounds under a process of improvement, promising himself a signal triumph for his incomparable art in the difficult, and therefore glorious, achievement of polishing and trimming the rocks of Llanberris.'

have since overspread Great Britain. It is impossible to behold large and venerable oaks without emotion—such oaks, for instance, as that at Newland in the Forest of Dean, or the Birklands oak in Sherwood Forest. For abundance, great size, and fine proportions, the grove of oaks in Moccas Park cannot probably be excelled in the world. Wistman's Wood of stunted oak trees in the heart of Dartmoor must not be forgotten as a contrast. These singular trees are twisted, blown to one side, and covered with lichens, their heads cut off with the violence of storms, their growth depressed to an average height of ten or twelve feet. Indeed, the local proverb speaks of the wood as containing five hundred trees five hundred feet high, that is, that each tree averages one foot in height. This grove must, like its separate trees, be smothered in antiquity. It is known to have existed in the Conqueror's time. Again, the remnants of the Black Wood of Rannoch, with its mighty Scotch firs, with their brown boles and bright-red branches, giants belonging to the primæval forest which once overrun Scotland, must certainly be mentioned. Over many a Scottish moor, and even cropping up from the bed of rivers, the black and twisted roots of their progenitors may be noticed. Some great forest conflagration appears to have destroyed the trees of which these are the remains. An old witch, the gillies say, who breathed fire and brimstone, once winged her way over Northern Scotland, and hence the devastation witnessed to at present by these dark, strong roots. Woe betide the fisherman should the salmon he has hooked once take a fancy to find refuge behind their black fangs!

People cannot for the most part appreciate woods and woodlands at the present day save for their natural beauties. It was not always so. When every valley was more or less of a swamp, with patches of alder and willow everywhere diversifying the shining expanse, forming a grateful desolation for hundreds of duck, teal, snipe, and other water-loving birds, comfort, as well as a fear of malarious diseases, combined to induce men to dwell by preference on the higher ground, in the shelter of the woods. Ballad, fairy lore, and, above all, sylvan sport, set in the same direction. Youth and joy were never weary of the merry green-wood, with its mavises and great harts, afar from painted pomp. When the Wars of the Roses convulsed the realm, and even when at their close a sense of general insecurity pervaded the country, a reaction took place, and houses were built no longer on the hillside, where they would be conspicuous, but in the bottoms, where there was some hope of escaping an enemy's eye. It is

only since the beginning of the last century that security has once more led men to build on high and commanding elevations, and the intention of obtaining a view is a notion superadded to the original reasons for loving the hillside. Still, all the freest and wildest life of the country is to be found in the woodlands, and open-air existence possesses an endless charm for their devotees. Keepers, gypsies, poachers, woodmen, charcoal-burners and the like, never weary of their vocation, bringing them as it does face to face with nature, liberty, and all those pleasures which most distinguish rural life from the thousand artificial wants of a city. The fashion of picnics, and the delight taken in them by a higher class, is no inapt symbol of the joy such outdoor living brought to their forefathers. The banished Duke lived in the Forest of Arden, and a many merry men with him. It was not only the Douglas who espoused the proverb, ' Better to hear the lark sing than the mouse cheep.'

Many recent country lovers have told the delights of the woods, their warmth in winter, the animals, birds, and retiring creatures that inhabit them, their silence and awe in the heart of summer heats ; but perhaps sufficient justice has hardly yet been done to their singular charm when ' the dark delightsome woods lie veiled and still ' in moonlight. Even he who knows them best must then confess that they offer ever fresh beauties when lit up here by a brilliant moon and there left in the darkest contrasts of shade. Unexpected withdrawals and revelations, the softening sense of a peace which is hardly of this world, cool, fragrant bowers, unknown depths of thickets mantled in traveller's joy and lit up with the large nettle-leaved bell-flower, the rustle of wild creatures, the monotonous whirr of the fern-owl, and distant scream of its brother, the brown owl—such are some of the nocturnal joys of a wood. Sharp eyes may detect the pheasant on his perch,

While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke
Gently o'er th' accustomed oak.

In winter the moonlight lies amber-coloured over the snow in many glades filled with old thorn trees. They are hung here and there with lichens, while each gnarled bush is green with two or three clumps of mistletoe—old age, and next it perpetual youth, like Merlin and Vivien ; and none save those who have seen them can guess the effect when these hawthorns put on their silver-embroidered robes under a young May moon. The

rookery is never silent on a moonlit night. Belated rooks (probably old bachelors) 'knock in' late, and are received with suitable reprobation by the anxious matrons with their young. These have to be aroused every now and then by their hoarse parents through the night, and the earliest streak of dawn finds industrious birds flitting off to collect food. Very quiet are the deer, slipping from glade to glade in the moonlight, soon learning to disregard intruders who do not needlessly alarm them. The nightingale is a capricious bird, and may be heard a mile away from such a wood, but nothing will persuade it to cross hither. It were invidious to mention one wood more than another where the spirit of poetry loves to dwell, but two may certainly be named. How grateful has many an Oxford scholar been for the slopes and wild flowers of Bagley Wood! and where could he find a haunt dearer to the Muses than the wood in which Lady Alice Egerton and her brothers were surprised by Comus,

The nodding horror of whose shady brows
Threats the forlorn and wandering passenger?

Unter den Linden again, but the glints of autumnal sunshine now fall upon half a dozen old limes that break the violence of the north wind for the long low rectory. Its master strolls with reflective steps beneath them, as he has done for more than fifty years. The nuthatches, as of old, still hammer over his head, the red-breast begins its shrill song from the neighbouring laurels. As the old man stops, his eye falls upon some letters cut many years ago in the bark of one of the limes. He remembers how cheerily a happy pair cut them, with the refrain of *crescent illæ, crescentis amores* running in their hearts. And then they married and went to Ceylon, and have long since died. Here are some more letters; and he dimly traces the initials of other boys who sought Canada to make fortunes in, and have never returned. He himself is a widower, his partner in the walks under these limes having passed away many years ago. In the nature of things he must soon be carried under them to a home even longer than he has found beside them. But he is cheerful, and largely indebted for health to his love of nature. His brother at the hall might see more of him, but then his brother is an obstinate, determined old man, and even went the length of turning him off the trout stream, and forbidding him to shoot pheasants in the home wood, and everyone knows no quarrels are so inveterate as the quarrels of relations. An invisible drudge seems to whisper to them daily.

‘Remember Uncle H. or Cousin C.!’ just as Darius caused a slave to remind him every day at dinner, ‘O King, remember the Athenians!’ But a parochial quarrel is proverbially a long one also. Once upon a time, a parson, with whom his squire had nursed a quarrel for twenty years, was walking home late on a cold December night when a man drove past him, then stopped and called out, ‘Will you get up and drive?’ The parson eagerly stepped out to the middle of the road, unwitting who his friend might be, and suddenly beheld the face of his peculiarly rancorous squire, much cast down as he now realised whom he had asked to drive. ‘Thank you,’ the parson said, ‘but I won’t get up just now; one of us might fall out. Good night!’

M. G. WATKINS

The Royal Blue.

EVEN the most devoted of her children can hardly maintain that London is a city 'where *every* prospect pleases.' Take the station-yard at Victoria on a wet morning, for instance; for unmitigated mud and melancholy, surely *that* prospect is hard to beat!

So thought the conductor of one of the many arriving, departing, or stationary omnibuses in the yard, at any rate. He jerked his head several times, and accompanied the movement with a disapproving ejaculation. Then he surveyed the scene with eyes well accustomed, though not yet indifferent to, its wretchedness. The air was thick with yellow fog; from the reeking horses clouds of white smoke mingled with the murky atmosphere. Jolting cabs driven by surly mackintoshed drivers, all sleek and shiny in the blinding drizzle, passed one another in the gloom. Men and women hurried in and out of the station, splashing over the greasy uneven cobble stones, and getting spattered from head to foot with mud as a hansom or an omnibus passed them.

The conductor shrugged his shoulders, dragged up his coat-collar a little higher, and turned to the solitary occupant of his bus with a smile which robbed his remark—'Beastly damp mornin', mum'—of half its discontent.

He wore a mud-coloured, well-splashed overcoat, and a pale-blue tie. His hat was set well back on his head. His face was broad and homely. Round his wide mouth were many creases, which deepened and multiplied as he smiled.

The passenger he addressed was a lady of uncertain age. She possessed the conventional figure of the ample-proportioned type. She carried herself rather uncompromisingly erect. Her bonnet trimmed with velvet pansies, and her thick gown of rustling black silk, gave her an air of suitable yet chastened smartness. Her round face with its bright spot of colour on the cheekbones, her large black eyes, and exceedingly glossy hair—beautifully waved—

in some subtle manner suggested Bond Street and Truefitt's. She was in fact a 'young lady' in a hairdresser's establishment.

To the undeniably veracious, though unconventionally worded observation of the conductor, this lady returned a chilling assent, and gazed straight at the advertisement before her.

Tilting his hat still further back till it rested on the nape of his neck, the undaunted conductor continued the conversation, or monologue rather, quite as though he had a more interested audience than one lady studying advertisements.

'Strainge wot a funny lot 'er people a man like me gets ter knaow,' he mused. 'Gen'neman says ter me yesterday, "Monot'rous kind er life this, guv'nor, ain't it?" "Monot'rous, sir," says I, "wy——"'

'How soon do you start?' inquired the lady abruptly, turning her large black eyes slowly in the direction of the door where the conversational conductor nonchalantly leaned.

'Wite 'ere five minutes, laidy,' he returned cheerfully. 'Trine ain't in yet. We shall fill up then. 'Ere comes some of my folks! See that little man with the portmantew? 'E always hev box seat. See 'im rush some mornin's when there's a cram! Mornin', sir! Plaice all w'itin' for yer. Kep' for yer, sir!' he shouted, with a grin, as the little man came up panting. 'Yes,' turning once more with interest to his solitary auditor, 'as I was s'yin', mum. Monot'rous? God bless you! W'y, it's as good as 'er pl'y! Many's the rummy goes I could tell yer about—all pl'yd out afore me in the inside, or out on top of this 'ere bus. It's like bein' at the 'Delphi, 'pon my word it is! Only it's aggravatin' not seein' the end of the pl'y sometimes. Curtain runs down afore you want it to!' He chuckled, and the creases round his mouth seemed to spread all over his face as he stamped vigorously on the footboard to warm his feet.

The glossy-haired lady glanced at him, not encouragingly, but he was in no wise disconcerted.

'I a'most always gets the saime people, yer see,' he explained confidentially. 'Leastways for a week, or sometimes a month or two at a toime. Hevry now and ag'in there'll be a fresh one, jest for variety, saime as you might be to-d'y, mum; but gen'ly they're the saime. Hev to be at their shops, or their bisness, wotever it is, at the saime time ev'ry d'y; that's w're 'tis. Jest now there's a young couple—they'll be 'ere in a minit. Lor! I've watched them two courtin', though they do keep it to theirselves pretty

much! But *I've* seed it.' He winked gaily. 'Knowned one another afore they took to comin' by this 'ere bus though.'

'An' 'ow do I know *that*, you ask?'

This for rhetorical effect merely, for the rigid lady in the corner had certainly not inquired, and the conductor complacently went on to answer his own question.

'Bout a month ago the young laidey took to comin' reg'lar. 'E'd been afore—always on top, of course, unless it r'ined (though I 'ave known 'im give up 'is seat and go hupstairs on a wet d'y w'en some young gurl come runnin' up with a big box p'raps, an' that's more than most of 'em 'ull do.) The first d'y she come, she sat w'ere you are, mum. She 'ad some paipers an' books in 'er 'and, and I see 'er go in that first d'y to the orfice w'ere she always stops. Typewritin' or suthin', I think; but that's neither 'ere nor there! She was sittin' quiet like afore the bus started, w'en all of a minit I see her colour come! (A sweet pretty young l'idy I call her. I'm not for yer dressed-up, loud-talkin' gurls!) With that I looked round, *expectin'* ter see a young fellow of some kind, and there 'e was! A pleasant spoke young man as I'd passed the time of day with often enough! W'en 'e catches sight of 'er, 'e chainges colour a bit too, but in 'e steps, determined like, an' as masterful as you please.

"Good mornin', Miss Verney"—or some sich naime, says 'e, and they shaike 'ands. Then down 'e sits by 'er, and looks at 'er sharp like, and I (lookin' out er one oi, with t'other fixed careless like on the driver of the Fav'rit, d'ye see?) noticed 'er 'ands begin ter tremble. 'E saw it too; you'd only got ter give a 'asty glance at 'is faice ter notice that. Then 'e looked down at 'er paipers, an' touched one, an' looked up at 'er as much as ter s'y, "Wot's *this* mean?" She laughed a little—nervous like—an' says she, "I'm goin' to be independent, Mr. Stuart." 'E didn't s'y nothin', but I catched another of them sharp looks—like lightnin'—an' if hever a man looked proud an' appy, it was 'im! She blushed up pink, an' says, 'asty like, "'Ow does your work get on?" and wot 'e answered I don't knaow, for jest at that minit I was 'elpin' in a stout party wot allus comes pantin' hup as if she 'adn't another minit ter live. 'Ere she comes now! See 'er? with a bundle as big as 'erself. Runnin' as usual, an' we not due to start yet fer two minits!

'Not that she wanted no hanswer,' he continued, easily taking up the dropped thread of his narrative, 'for some'ow or nuther them two young folks understood each other.' The fat lady with

the bundle now claimed his attention. She was hoisted in with great care, and deposited panting and breathless in a corner, whence she surveyed the almost empty 'bus with a triumphant smile.

Meantime, with the courtly flourish which he always reserved for her, the conductor indicated the vacant seat opposite to the next comer, a young and delicate-looking girl, who sank into it rather wearily. She was, as the conductor observed, a 'pretty-looking young lady.' There was something daintily flower-like about her pale face. Emerging from the sad coloured and rather damp waterproof which fastened closely round her throat, it suggested the frail beauty of a white anemone rising above dark earth. The conductor smiled at her in friendly fashion from the door, but the smile faded and was followed by a grotesquely puzzled expression when she raised her blue eyes to respond to his 'Good mornin'.'

He turned his back to the interior of the omnibus, and surveyed the yard impatiently. It was time to start. Reluctantly he put his hand upon the bell. Then his face brightened. 'Come on, sir—on'y *jest* in time, sir. Room for one inside——' but the young man, who had sprung upon the footboard just as the omnibus was starting, glanced within and ran up the steps to the top. The conductor followed him with his eyes, his jaw dropped with comical effect, then he gazed before him into vacancy with the expression of one who stands mute before the riddle of existence. He maintained this attitude almost as far as Hyde Park Corner, where he roused himself with a jerk, and sharply called, 'Fares, please.' For some moments he clicked the ticket-punching machine vigorously, as if to make up for lost time. He did not look at the girl in the far corner when she mutely handed him twopence, but hastily thrust the ticket into her hand, and turned to her opposite neighbour.

By the time he reached the hairdresser's young lady at the door, however, his pent-up feelings could restrain themselves no longer.

'Horf! by Jingo,' he muttered in an undertone, as he fumbled in his bag to get change for sixpence.

For many days the conductor of the 'Royal Blue' watched his play, and still the curtain did not descend. He continued to take the silent hairdresser's lady into his confidence, possibly because she did not interrupt his flow of speech with any

eloquence of her own, which to a person of his loquacity must have been particularly grateful and comforting. He always waited till the delicate little lady, whose dainty face had grown thinner and paler of late, had alighted at the top of the street which led to her office, and then if the 'bus was tolerably empty he would begin at once *sotto voce*.

' Still horf,' he whispered tragically one morning a month or two later, ' but they're both pinin'. I see it clear as d'ylight in 'is hi; an' as for 'er—poor little soul!—miserabler and miserabler 'er looks are. Now wot darned foolishness can it be? Some-thin' about parients I shouldn't wonder. Blow them parients—(askin' your parding, Miss)—says I. An' she over 'ed an' ears in love with 'im, and 'e with 'er. 'Aven't you noticed 'im 'angin' about that there yard till just as we're startin', an' we're all but full up, on top? Then up 'e comes, an' swings 'issel up in front so as ter avide passin' 'er. Bein' a man, an' therefore a fool in sich-like w'ys, 'e thinks she doesn't notice 'im, an' 'e can please 'issel (or p'r'aps 'arf kill 'issel) by 'avin' a look at 'er on' the sly. But Lor'! she sees fast enough. P'r'aps you 'aven't notice 'er 'ands shakin', an' 'er colour comin' an' goin' be'ind that there libery book she 'olds up ter pertend she's readin'? I was a bit puzzled like at first. Thinks I, if so be as they've quarrelled, as in coarse they 'ave, an' she's ast 'im ter keep out of 'er w'y, as in coarse agine she 'as (they all s'y *that*, yer knaow, Miss, an' some of us is fools enough to b'leeve they mean it), that bein' so, thinks I, w'y does 'e come by the saime bus at all? But evidinkly it's a question of trines, an' 'avin' to fit in roight houers an' be punkshull, with both of 'em. Next 'bus don't run for ten minutes after this, an' the "R'yal Blue's" the only one that passes 'is street, an' by the looks of 'im I shouldn't say there's much of the needful to spend on kebs, if 'e 'opes (as in coarse 'e does 'ope) to ask 'er "to share 'is 'umble 'ome," so ter speak, Miss, an' beggin' your parding for introdoocin' comick songs, w'ich it is *Mrs. Enry'Awkins*, as p'r'aps you've 'eard tell of more'n once.'

Here the omnibus stopped, and two or three people climbed down from above. ' Good mornin', sir. Fine mornin'! Give me yer umbreller, mum. Gently! There yer are!' A stout lady was gracefully lifted to a place of safety on the pavement, and went off rather red and flustered. ' Oxford Street! Vere Street! Roight—be'ind! ' A stamp on the foot-board, and the interval devoted to duty was brought in a business-like way to a close.

' Naow,' he continued impressively, ' mark my words, all them

young folks want ter set things goin' strite an' comfertable agine, is a little confidenshull talk—loike. They ought ter be brung together. That's wot *they* want.' He was silent for half a second—not longer.

'Yes,' he repeated confidently; 'I 'aven't watch this 'ere bloomin' pl'y for nothink—brung tergether, that's all *they* want. W'y, on'y yester'd'y—it was a bad d'y, if yew remember right?—drizzlin' rine—orrid! 'E comes up at the last minit, an' runs upstairs, an' she sees 'im. 'E coughs, goin' up—fog got down 'is throat, shouldn't wonder, but she, bless 'er 'eart, thinks 'e'll git consumpshun out there in the rine. I cud see the fear of it come into 'er eyes. She 'esitaites a minit, an' then up she gits ter step out, an' as she passes me she says, low an' quick-like, "Tell the gen'neman outside ter come in. I'll take this green 'bus—p'raps I shall catch you up at Bond Street." She didn't, though, an' no doubt she was laite. I ran up quick fer ter tell 'im, an' 'e starts an' looks round quick, as is 'is w'y, jest in toime ter see 'er steppin' inter the green 'bus—then down 'e comes with a queer-like look on 'is faice. Ah, well, mum! It's a rum world! 'Ere we are! Wite a bit, an' mind yer doan't step in the puddle; let me 'elp yer down. All roight, mum! Good mornin'! The lady sailed, as majestically as the greasy pavements would admit of that form of locomotion, in the direction of Langham Place, and the conductor went into the public-house at the corner.

A day or two later the 'Royal Blue' stood as usual in the station-yard, awaiting its human freight. Another omnibus of the same species had just started, and at present the only occupants of the waiting one were the hairdresser's lady, who sat next the door, and the conductor's protégée. She had betaken herself, as her custom was whenever the seat was vacant, into the far corner, where she sat with a book open on her lap. In the doorway, like a guardian angel, stood the conductor, surveying the prospect without. Presently his eye fell upon a figure advancing from the opposite side of the yard—a figure hastening towards the omnibus.

'H'm—thinks we're startin', he muttered. He shot a quick glance over his shoulder at the drooping little figure in the corner, then he looked closely at the hairdresser's lady, from her to the advancing figure, and then, after one second's hesitation, his face expressed sudden resolve. Bending towards the dark-eyed one, he whispered too low to be overheard:

'There's a green 'bus just a-startin', mum. You kin ketch us up at Bond Street!' The whisper was accompanied by a meaning glance, first in the direction of the station-yard, and then towards the other end of the 'bus.

The lady's eyes followed his. There was a moment's pause. Then she rose, gathered up her stiff rustling skirts, and with an air of dignity tempered with condescension, descended. A young man, just in the act of springing on to the footboard, brushed against her. He raised his hat with a smiling apology, and stepped back to help her out, and she acknowledged his assistance with a stately bow. The anxious cloud still hovered over the conductor's face. He had adroitly stationed himself at the foot of the steps so as to bar the way to the ascent.

'Room inside, sir,' he announced, and there was only the faintest doubtful accent in his tone.

The young man hesitated on the threshold, and the girl raised her eyes. Then he went in.

'You will find the laidy on the right, sir,' said the conductor blithely.

He sharply rang the bell, and with a plunge the horses started forward, and the 'bus containing two inside passengers lumbered out of the yard.

The conductor had gone to the top for a little chat with the driver before the station gates were passed, and though a gentleman with a heavy bag pursued them with animated language for some distance, his conversation proved so engrossing that, until the first stopping-place, the lovers enjoyed a *solitude à deux*.

With great delicacy on descending he promptly unhooked the way-bill from the door, and studied it attentively for some minutes, when he returned it to its place. It is probable that constant practice in the art of seeing without looking accounted for the complacent smile which from time to time deepened the wrinkles round his mouth, as he stood with his back to the passengers cheerfully whistling the 'Royal Fusiliers' at intervals.

At the Piccadilly end of Bond Street, contrary to their usual custom, the two got out, and leaning as far back as he could when the omnibus rounded the corner, the conductor saw the young man plunge recklessly into a flower-shop.

There were many stoppages in the journey up Bond Street, so it happened that he watched them as they came up the street together.

She had her hands full of violets; she had fastened a bunch

of them into the front of her gown, which was a light one, as beffited Spring. There was a dainty colour in her cheeks, and her eyes were like two stars. She seemed to be talking gaily. Once she glanced up to where soft milky clouds went racing before the warm wind over a field of blue, and said something to the young man, who smiled and looked as though he wished they were anywhere but in Bond Street. They were passing the omnibus just then, and the girl glanced up at the conductor. The light wind, which even in Bond Street was laden with the subtle Spring scent of violets, fluttered her dress. Involuntarily her lips parted in a happy smile, and her colour deepened as she nodded to him prettily.

The conductor beamed, and the strains of the 'Royal Fusiliers' rose louder and clearer, as the two passed out of sight down one of the side streets.

'Oughter be the "Weddin' March,"' he chuckled; 'an' *I* done it—me and the black 'aired lady,' he added generously.

'Oxford Street—Vere Street. 'Ere y'are, lady! Roight be'ind!'

NETTA SYRETT.

Vesper.

THE heron left her watch and hit the cloud,
 And laboured homewards to her wood of pines;
 And, as the red west died, a wreathing shroud
 Came feeling on in west of silver lines.
 The laughter died out of the village street;
 The anvil's echoes sank into the hill;
 The tower's challenging, low-tongued and sweet,
 A moment lingered—and the land was still.

So gently day his mantle round him drew,
 You had not known that moment he was hid,
 But that the shy stars, shivering wan and few,
 Crept into place. And now the cricket chid
 The chilling hours; and now the wanderer moon
 Moved into her blue sea with placid light,
 And 'Good night' sighed the river's softened tune,
 And from the ether came again 'Good night.'

AUBYN TREVOR-BATTYE.

Bacterial Life and Light.

EARLY in the present century, a German physician incidentally wrote 'Our houses, hospitals, and infirmaries will, without doubt, some day be like hot-houses, so arranged that the light, even that of the moon and stars, is permitted to penetrate without let or hindrance.' This was spoken long before the world of micro-organisms had been discovered, but curiously has found an echo in the writings of a distinguished bacteriological chemist in recent years. 'Laissons donc entrer largement partout l'air et le soleil,' writes M. Duclaux; 'c'est là une maxime bien ancienne, mais si les mots sont vieux l'idée qu'ils revêtent est nouvelle.' The interpretation of this ancient maxim is indeed very modern, and we must turn to the investigations made within the past few years to learn with what justification M. Duclaux thus expresses himself.

Microbes at the present time cannot be said to be in very good odour, indeed hardly any expression is too bad for them when some mischief or misfortune has been traced to their agency, the abuse being changed into ridicule when, although present in large numbers, they have not been found guilty of any evil deeds, whilst their beneficent actions on the other hand are entirely overlooked. But, whether active or quiescent, whether useful or detrimental, there is no doubt that this newly discovered world of life would be remorselessly relegated by many to the regions of the unknown.

Wanted or not by us, bacteria, however, are intimately connected with all our surroundings; and, having learnt some of the conditions under which they exist, and the astonishing rapidity with which they can multiply, it is not unnatural to inquire why they are not present in even larger numbers in the air we breathe, and in the water we drink; what agencies are at work which operate unfavourably to them or hold them in check.

As in many other instances, what nature gives so prodigally with one hand she seems to snatch almost as carelessly away with the other. Endowed with this miraculous power of multiplication

or self-preservation, micro-organisms are extremely sensitive to the action of sunshine, a very few hours' exposure in many cases being sufficient to destroy them, and it was in reference to some recent discoveries made on this subject that Duclaux used the words already referred to.

It would be impossible here to enter into the numerous discussions which have arisen, or to describe in detail the many investigations which have been carried out in this branch of bacteriology alone during the past ten years or so, but it may be of interest to gain some idea of the manner in which the sun's rays act prejudicially upon bacteria.

That light had a deleterious effect upon micro-organisms was first discovered in this country by Messrs. Downes and Blunt, and their investigations led Professor Tyndall to carry out some experiments on the Alps, in which he showed that flasks containing nutritive solutions and infected with bacteria when exposed in the sunshine for twenty-four hours remained unaltered, whilst similar vessels kept in the shade became turbid, showing that in these the growth of bacteria had not been arrested. In these experiments mixtures of micro-organisms were employed, and the interest of the French investigations which followed lies in the use of particular microbes—notably the anthrax bacillus and its spores,¹ Roux demonstrating very conclusively that the bacillar form was far more sensitive to light than the spore form, while Momont quite recently, in a classical series of experiments, not only fully confirms these earlier observations, but shows also that the intensity of the action of light depends to a very large extent on the environment of the organism. Thus, if broth containing anthrax bacilli is placed in the sunshine, the latter are destroyed in from two to two and a half hours, whilst if blood containing these organisms is similarly exposed, their destruction is only effected after from twelve to fourteen hours of sunshine. This difference in resistance to insolation was also observed in the case of dried blood and broth respectively—eight hours' exposure killing the bacilli in the former, whilst five hours sufficed in the latter.

This is an instance of the apparent idiosyncrasies possessed by micro-organisms, which render their study at once so fasci-

¹ In the interior of some bacilli there appears a round or oval body, having a very bright and shining lustre, which is known as a *spore*, and plays a most important part in the propagation of many kinds of bacilli. These spores are capable of resisting many hardships, which would be immediately fatal to the parent bacilli from which they have sprung.

nating and so difficult, and it is being thus constantly confronted with what in our ignorance we mentally designate as 'whims,' that we can hardly resist the impression of these tiny forms of life being endowed with individual powers of discernment and discrimination. Indeed, these powers of selection and judgment are in certain cases so delicately adjusted that in some of the modern chemical laboratories micro-organisms have become indispensable reagents, and by their means new substances have been prepared and fresh contributions made to the science of chemistry.

Momont is not able to give any satisfactory explanation of this different behaviour of the anthrax bacilli in these two media, but goes on to show that yet another factor plays an important part during insolation.

In the above experiments air was allowed to gain access to the vessels containing the broth, but if the precaution be taken of first removing the air and then exposing them to the sunshine, a very different result was obtained, for instead of the anthrax bacilli dying in from two to two and a half hours, they were found to be still alive after fifty hours' insolation. There appears, therefore, to be no doubt that the sunshine in some way or other endows the atmospheric oxygen with destructive power over the living protoplasm of the bacterial cells; indeed, there is considerable reason to believe that the bactericidal effect is due to the generation of peroxide of hydrogen, which is well known to possess powerfully antiseptic properties.

Numerous investigations have been also made to determine whether all the rays of the spectrum are equally responsible for the bactericidal action of light.

Geisler's work in St. Petersburg, published last year, is especially instructive in this respect, for by decomposing with a prism the sun's light, as well as that emitted by a 1000 candle-power electric lamp, into their constituent rays, he was able to compare the different effect produced by the separate individual rays of both these sources of light.

The organism selected was the typhoid bacillus, and it was found that its growth was retarded in all parts of the two spectra excepting in the red, and that the intensity of the retardation was increased in passing from the red towards the ultra-violet end of the spectrum, where it was most pronounced of all.

But whereas from two to three hours of sunshine were sufficient to produce a most markedly deleterious effect upon

the typhoid bacillus, a similar result was only obtained by six hours' exposure to the electric light.

From a hygienic point of view the bactericidal action of light is of perhaps most interest in connection with organisms in water, for it is to water at the present time that we look for the dissemination of some of the most dreaded zymotic diseases.

Comparatively little has been done in this direction, but those results which have been obtained are exceedingly interesting and suggestive. Professor Buchner published recently some preliminary experiments which he had made with particular micro-organisms. In these investigations boiled tap-water was used to ensure the absence of all bacteria except those which were subsequently introduced and, whilst some of the vessels were exposed to sunshine, others were simultaneously preserved in the dark. It was found that typhoid, cholera, and various other bacilli were most deleteriously affected by insolation. Perhaps an example will best serve to illustrate the nature of the results obtained. Some boiled water contained in a flask was inoculated with an immense number of a bacillus, closely resembling the typhoid organism, normally present in the body and frequently found in water, the *bacillus coli communis*. So many were introduced that nearly 100,000 individuals were present in every 20 drops of the water. This flask, then, containing water so densely sown with microbes, was placed in the sunshine for one hour, whilst another and similar flask was kept during the same time in the dark. On being subsequently examined it was ascertained that whereas a slight increase in the number of bacilli had taken place in the 'dark' flask, in the isolated flask *absolutely no living organisms whatever* were present.

Professor Percy Frankland has also been investigating the action of sunshine on micro-organisms in water, and in the last report to the Water Research Committee of the Royal Society an account is given of the effect of insolation on the vitality of the spores of anthrax in Thames water. These experiments show again what an important influence the surroundings of the organism have on the bactericidal potency of the sun's rays, for the remarkable fact was established that when immersed in water anthrax spores are far less prejudicially affected by sunlight than when exposed in ordinary culture materials such as broth or gelatine. Thus it was only after 151 hours' insolation in Thames water that these spores were entirely destroyed, whilst a few hours' exposure in the usual culture media is generally sufficient for

their annihilation. In water not subjected to insolation anthrax spores were found to retain their vitality for several months.

In case the reader should be tempted to compare these results with those obtained by Buchner, it must be borne in mind that whereas those experiments were made with *bacilli*, these were directed to determine the behaviour of *spores* in water which are some of the hardiest forms of living matter with which we are acquainted. This alone would sufficiently explain the results obtained, whilst each variety of microbe may be, and doubtless is, differently affected during insolation.

We know now that a remarkable improvement takes place in the bacterial condition of water during its prolonged storage in reservoirs, and although, no doubt, the processes of sedimentation which have been shown to take place during this period of repose are to a large extent responsible for the diminution in the number of bacteria present, yet it is also highly probable that insolation assists considerably in this improvement, at any rate, in the upper layers of the water. As the depth of the water increases the action of light is necessarily diminished, indeed, exact experiments conducted in the lake of Geneva to ascertain by means of photographic plates the depth to which the sun's rays penetrate, showed that they did not reach beyond 553 feet, at which depth the intensity of the light is equal to that which is ordinarily observed on a clear but moonless night, so that long before that their bactericidal potency would cease.

But exposure to sunshine, even when it does not destroy, may effect profound changes in the physiological character of certain micro-organisms. Many microbes are able to elaborate when grown on various culture media, such as gelatine or slices of potato, most brilliant and beautiful pigments ranging from intense blood-red to the most delicate shades of pink, and embracing every gradation of yellow, as well as browns, greens, and violets. Now it has been found that some of these pigment-producing bacteria when exposed to sunshine on these nutritive materials fail to exhibit their characteristic colour, although the duration of insolation may not have sufficed to destroy their actual vitality. One of these organisms originally obtained from water has been specially studied in this respect by M. Laurent. If slices of potato are streaked with a small number of this particular bacillus (*bacille rouge de Kiel*) a magnificent patch of blood-red colour makes its appearance in the course of a day or two, but if on the other hand similar slices of potato are exposed to three hours'

sunshine, a colourless growth subsequently develops, except where here and there a few isolated spots of pale pink are visible. When the insolation is prolonged for five hours nothing whatever appears on the potato, the bacilli having been entirely destroyed. But this is not all, M. Laurent found that if he took some of the colourless growth and inoculated it on to potatoes he obtained again, but without insolation, a colourless vegetation—in fact, three hours' insolation had so modified the physiological character of the bacillus that *a new race had been generated, a race permanently deprived of its power of producing this red pigment.* In what numerous directions the character of microbes may be and are being modified, even by simple exposure to sunshine, opens up a wide field for speculation and research, whilst the tractability of these minute and most primitive forms of life, if we only approach their education with sufficient insight and patience, may enable us to make them serve where they now are masters.

'Phenomena of this kind, moreover, clearly indicate that there may be around us numerous forms of micro-organisms of the potentiality of which we are still quite ignorant. It is surely exceedingly probable, therefore, that many of the micro-organisms with which we are already acquainted may be possessed of numerous important properties which are lying dormant until brought into activity by suitable cultivation. The power of modifying the characters of bacteria is of the highest importance in connection with the problems of evolution, for in these lowly forms of life in which under favourable circumstances generation succeeds generation in a period of as little as twenty minutes, it should be possible, through the agency of selection, to effect metamorphoses, both of morphology and physiology, which would take ages in the case of more highly organised beings to bring about. We hear much from the enthusiastic apostles of education about the possibility of altering the human race through a suitable course of training, but even the most sanguine of these theorists cannot promise that any striking changes will be effected within several generations, so that such predictions cannot be tested until long after these reformers have passed away. In the case of micro-organisms, however, we can study the effect of educational systems consequentially pursued through thousands of generations within even that short span of life which is allotted to us here.'

G. C. FRANKLAND.

At the Sign of the Ship.

MR. STEAD has been 'drawing' the bishops for their views about his magazine, *Border Land*, and the bishops have 'dallied with their golden chains, and, smiling, put the question by.' I do not blame the bishops. Why should they answer Mr. Stead, any more than they would answer me if I sent them a circular and asked them what they thought of the Homeric Question? To supply a gratuitous advertisement (for that is what it comes to) is no part of the duty of a bishop. If once they yielded to these demands, their whole time would be occupied. Besides, a bishop may say, the question of a future life is settled, for me, by evidence of which the record is within every man's reach. More evidence is superfluous. The sacred writers do not need to be backed up by Mr. Stead's spectral friend, 'Julia.' One bishop, however, gave his mind now and then to the folk-lore of ghosts. He was the Bishop of Hippo. St. Augustine was a man of clear common-sense. Granted, says he, that you see a ghost in a dream (he does not go much further), it does not follow that the dead man knows anything about the matter. St. Augustine had a pupil who, in his turn, became a professor. He was lecturing to his class on Cicero, and one night he 'got up' the lesson for the following day. Some obscure passage baffled him, he was kept awake by the difficulty, and, at last falling asleep, beheld his old tutor, St. Augustine. The saint explained the obscure passage, and I gather that his explanation was satisfactory. 'Now,' writes St. Augustine, 'I knew nothing of the matter. I may have been asleep, or thinking of anything else.' Hence, he argues that what is true of a living man may be true of a dead man. The owner, as it were, of the apparition, may be entirely unacquainted with its doings. The apparition may be something else over which the dead man has no control. In the case of the difficult text in Cicero, the explanation was, no doubt, given by the mind of the professor, the dream took the

shape of the professor's old tutor. Nothing could be more natural. This is a kind of bishop worth examining; but, somehow, I do not expect Mr. Stead to carry his inquiries into Africa, to Hippo.

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Automatic writing, in which Mr. Stead is a proficient, is a field in which anyone may make experiments. I have tried (not looking at the paper as Mr. Stead does), and find, as most people do, that the pencil scrawls aimlessly. But once it wrote, and the word it wrote was—MESMER! What a chance for Mr. Stead this would have been, to be 'controlled' by Mesmer were fortunate indeed, for a true believer. But I did not pursue the research—Mesmer seemed to have an idiotic habit of writing his own name, and nothing else. This soon becomes tedious. Historical investigation is more interesting. Scott probably did not know that the essence of Wandering Willie's tale is as old as Synesius. A man named Evagrius gave Synesius a bag of gold for his parish, on the chance of being repaid in the future life. Evagrius's heirs disputed the transaction. The documents had been buried in the tomb of the testator. They were exhumed, and a receipt by Evagrius, which had not been there when they were deposited, was found endorsed on the back of the bill. Here was 'direct writing' with a vengeance. Synesius was a good sportsman, and not the man to use sympathetic ink, so the story may be recommended to amateurs of 'slate-writing.' It is not so dramatic as Wandering Willie's narrative, but to get a receipt from a dead man is the essence of both legends. There are no new stories, but the old ones are very good. Scott himself remarks, on a dream story in a note to *The Antiquary*, that it had already been told by St. Augustine. Briefly, a man having lost a law deed, his dead father, in a dream, tells him how he may recover it. The Scotch intellect adds that the dead man told how he and his attorney, having a moidore, and not being able to get change, liquidated the sum by drinking it. The attorney, who had forgotten the rest of the transaction, remembered this part of it. That element in the anecdote is omitted by the Bishop of Hippo.

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St. Augustine has another case where the 'agent' who appeared in the dream was not wholly unconscious of the effect which he was producing. I quote it from Mr. Tylor's *Primitive*

Culture, not having St. Augustine at hand. A man whom the saint knew, found some difficulties in Plato. He paid a visit to a philosopher, and asked him to clear the matter up. But the philosopher was crabbed and refused. 'At home, one night, before going to sleep,' he saw the philosopher, who construed the text for him with comments. Now, was the student in bed, or not, at the time? Mr. Tylor does not say, and circumstances have put St. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, xviii. 18, out of my reach at the moment of writing. Afterwards, the student met the philosopher, and asked why he came to *his* house, when he refused to be kind at his own. 'I did not do it,' said the philosopher, 'but I dreamt I did.' 'And thus,' said Augustine, 'that was exhibited to one, by phantastic image while waking, which the other saw in dream.' This is a pretty piece of telepathy, but, instead of taking it in that light, Mr. Tylor chooses it as an example of the primitive theory of dreams—namely, that the spiritual self of the dreamer is detached, and is wandering about. But, if the story is true, or if any story like it is true, then the primitive theory, in some instances, is a correct theory. But Mr. Tylor expressly leaves all that side of things out of his argument, which has never seemed to me quite philosophical. If there are some grains of fact in such narratives, then the primitive hypothesis is, to some extent, based on actuality, and that would be a very important circumstance. In Mr. Tylor's view, the hypothesis of a spirit in man was founded by savage philosophers, on 'dreams and visions.' But, we ask, 'what is a vision?' after all; we ask if it never has an objective basis. Obviously, if it has, then we must reconsider a great deal of our philosophy.

* * *

There is a field in which visions, at least, as a rule, are subjective—namely, in 'crystal-gazing.' This is a very old game. The Egyptians use ink, the Maoris stare at a drop of blood, Dr. Dee used, or made Kelly use, a crystal ball. There can be no doubt that some people see some things, some visions, by these means. Cases are published in which the visions seem to represent real persons, and events, and scenes, unknown to the gazer. I confess that my reason boggles at these assertions; the evidence is unconvincing. But other visions are merely fantastic, and very probably, or certainly, are truly reported, as by one accomplished lady, whose name need not be introduced here. These sights seem to resemble the views of faces and places which most

people, perhaps, behold internally, before falling asleep. I am not imaginative, and cannot see faces in the fire even. But often, before falling asleep, I see panoramas of faces, beautiful, or hideous, but all unknown to me. They change rapidly, and a beautiful face will alter into a series of direful faces, terrible or grotesque. Now, most people, probably, when they shut their eyes, see faint luminous points, of different shapes and sizes. These, I think, become starting points and centres of fancy; they develop into the faces and landscapes; indeed, one has caught them in the act of so developing. In the same way, I imagine, the bright points in the crystal are starting points for the fantastic visions, which

A few discern,
And the rest, they may live and learn,

as Mr. Browning says. But, as to visions of real events in the past and future—well, that is a very different affair. Dr. Dee left a huge manuscript on the subject, part of it was published by Méric Casaubon. It is perfectly crazy.

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Another kind of bogie I am (historically) interested in is the noisy sprite who throws stones and things about. There are instances in *Obeah*, by Mr. H. J. Bell,¹ and Major mentions them in 1518, while folklore and witchcraft trials, and old bogie books, are full of them. I have given a number of cases in a new edition of Kirk's *Secret Commonwealth*. But, thanks to Mr. Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, I can now carry a stone-throwing Brownie back far beyond Major's *Brobne* or *Fauni* in 1518, back to 858 A.D. The brownie was in great force at Kembden, near Bingen, and is recorded in the annals of Rudolph of Fulda, in Pertz, 1, 372. The date of the occurrences was 856. 'A malignant spirit rapped heavily on the walls, as if with hammers.' When the clergy treated him with holy water, he threw stones, as at Rerrick, in Galloway, in 1695. He said he was the Familiar of a priest, who seems to have been the medium. Gervase of Tilbury (ch. xviii.) has the same tale of *folleti*, brownies, who pelt people with stones, and you shall find plenty of them, in New England about 1680, in Increase Mather's *Remarkable Providences*. It is always the same story as that told by the Rev. Joseph Bennet, of Brightling (1659). 'Divers things were

¹ Sampson Low.

thrown,' during prayers conducted by Mr. Bennet, 'as a dish, several times, crabs out of a tub, a hammer thrown twice, and a Bible.' Mr. Bennet was 'hit with a dish,' and a fast was held, and then, alas! 'their servant girl was at last found throwing some things.' Is it always the servant girl who plays these games? A house in Ireland was lately haunted in this way, till the people sent to Dublin for detectives. They came, and one night the lady of the house went down, late, to the kitchen, and found a detective asleep. Her high spirits induced her to make a noise, the man wakened, saw her, was very cross, and went away, all of which conduct was natural, and even praiseworthy. But the lady vowed that she was innocent of all the rest of the trouble, concerning which the judicious reader may form his own opinion. As Mr. Bennet says, 'a seeming blur was cast, if not on the whole, yet upon some part of it.'

* * *

Every angling library should possess *La Pêche*, by M. Edmond Renoir, a most diverting work on fishing in France. Out of 386 pages, ten are devoted to the trout, who, in his coloured portrait, has no freckles, nor red spots, but resembles a dace. Most trout have been poisoned with lime, or dynamited, in France, as it is said, this is the inevitable result of 'free fishing.' The trout, in the Jura and the Pyrenees, is *un poisson d'une subtilité et d'une force remarquables. Il se défend vigoureusement.* M. Renoir does not know much about trout, it seems, and goes for his information to a friend, a friend who *fishes down stream!* However, the friend, with fly, has caught a three-pound trout; what might he not catch if he fished up stream? M. Kresz has written on artificial flies, which are much the same as we use. '*A mon avis, l'important est de bien lancer la mouche,*' says M. Renoir, with truth. 'It's not the fly, but the driver,' as we say. He recommends the use of rings on the rod, and he seems to have heard of some kind of primitive reel. He recommends spearing trout with a hay fork; this is hardly thought legitimate in Hampshire. '*On n'est pas fixé sur les mœurs de la truite. Comme ils sont drôles, les mœurs!*' says Miss Blanche Amory. A reel is a *moulinet* in French, and our author disbelieves in reels. You cannot strike if you use a reel: it seems our author strikes, and, if he has hooked a big fish, throws his rod into the water. This is pre-Waltonian. Our author has to explain to an incredulous public that fish really do take an

artificial fly, and indeed only a Sutherland loch trout would take such queer flies as those in the engraving.

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It is difficult to say why, but any discussion of Americanisms always irritates Americans, that is, Americans who write. Nothing can be more natural and blameless than that new conditions of many sorts should reflect themselves in an old language, and, when the language was English, and the conditions are American, the resulting changes are Americanisms. 'What else can you call them,' and why should they not be observed and commented on by the student of language? One really can see no reason for irritation, and yet irritation exists. If the critic makes blunders, he is grateful to those who point them out, but he does not see why they should seem so annoyed. Mr. Dudley Warner, in *Harper's Magazine*, proclaims a happy discovery. The Americans do not speak English at all. Congress, in 1778, decided that the communications addressed to them by foreign nations 'shall be in the language of the United States.' 'Legally, therefore, the English have no right to criticise our language for nonconformity with theirs.' But must our statesmen address the President, say, 'in the language of the United States'? They would irritate him a good deal if they called him 'old hoss,' and asked him if 'he felt like brandy and water,' or told him he 'had the inner tracks' about the seals. Moreover, we certainly have no right to blame the Americans for want of conformity with English, but we may surely say that they do not always conform to the idioms of that dialect. Nobody denies their right to 'spell their language as it suits them,' but we may also, perhaps, spell ours as it suits us. The more the American language is accepted as the legal and historical American language, the more are Americanisms Americanisms. There is no way out of it, and we do not want to poach on that preserve of American undefiled. And yet, somehow, the very word 'Americanism' annoys the Columbian philologist. Why? Nobody can say. He ought to be proud of his Americanisms; he ought to try, if possible, to add to these glorious trophies. He ought to write as little like Prescott, or Longfellow, or Lowell as he can, and should welcome every free native neologism. The English philologist would gratefully recognise the richness of the results. For all that, I doubt if we shall find Mr. Dudley Warner using many Americanisms. About Mr. Edgar Fawcett one is not so certain.

In a trenchant historical parallel between Anthony Trollope and myself, Mr. Fawcett says that Mr. Trollope was 'considerable of a scholar.' This is not English, and I do not feel sure that it is 'the language of the United States.' Perhaps it is a misprint. But I am delighted with Mr. Fawcett's discovery that my 'style' (as if I had a style!) is 'rankly oleaginous.' Dr. Johnson might have said that; it is a fine phrase, and I am 'proud of the title, as the Living Skeleton said when they showed him.' These are the compliments which, even if they be too flattering, keep up a friendly and sympathetic spirit among men of the grey goose-quill. Of course, in this particular case, a great deal depends on the oil. Can Mr. Fawcett have had paraffin in his mind?

A writer in the *Critic* wants to know whether I am 'easily teased,' or whether I 'take my American tormentors as a huge joke.' Why, one takes them in a spirit of amiable reciprocity. They chaff me, and I try to chaff them: it is not a case of *ἔξ ἀμάξης ἴβριζειν*, a rankly oleaginous Greek phrase for Billingsgate, in case Mr. Edgar Fawcett is a country gentleman and needs a translation.

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In the June number of the 'Proceedings' of the Psychical Society, Mr. Myers prints (p. 119) some curious anecdotes from a 'Mr. O.' This gentleman made Mr. Myers's acquaintance through myself. He is recently dead, to the deep regret of many, for he was a good neighbour and a very good angler. As his tale now stands in print, it is not, I think, exactly the same as what he told me before he wrote it out. That there was a little 'spiritualist' circle, existing mainly for amusement; that the amateur medium wrote in 'trances,' and that he, certainly an unlettered man, wrote Greek, were all parts of Mr. O.'s story as told to myself. As his printed narrative stands, he says, 'Not yet satisfied' (with some Latin which he could not construe), 'I asked any quotation from a Greek author . . . This resulted in a quotation from the *Odyssey*, xi. 57, 58 :

'Ελπῆνορ, πῶς ἡλθες ἵππο ζόφον ἡερόεντα;
ἔφθης πεζὸς ἐών, ή ἐγὼ σὺν τῇ μελανῇ;

The lines are appropriate, in a spiritual affair. Odysseus, going into Hades a living man, meets the shade of a companion who, unknown to him, has died by an accident, and says, 'Elpenor,

how camest thou before me below the darkness and the shadow,
thou on foot, and I in a black ship ?'

Now my own recollection is that in Mr. O.'s tale told to me, he first asked the entranced medium for a line from Homer, and then for lines from *Odyssey*, book xi., which he got. My private explanation was that the Medium, here called 'Mr. Andrew' (his real name I never knew), was amusing himself; that he got 'coached' in a few Homeric lines, and then 'forced the question' as a juggler 'forces' a card. Not knowing the Medium, this appeared to me a thing much less improbable than that a spirit wrote through a living man's hand. The lines were 'beautifully written, and minute even to the accents.' The explanation, the intrinsically sceptical explanation, never occurred to Mr. O., nor was he present when a miracle occurred, as described on p. 121. However, the evidence is that of Mr. O.'s brother, whom I also knew. He was of a lively humour, but I think he regarded these occurrences seriously, and would not have been party to a hoax. The whole thing is a good example of the impossibility of attaining conviction. Those present regarded 'larking' as quite out of the question, and were puzzled, perhaps convinced. But strangers, in the mere interests of common-sense, are constrained to regard a practical joke as of at least as high probability as a set of miracles. It is, of course, hard on 'the spirits,' for they can do nothing, or scarcely anything, that a rather clever amateur conjurer could not do. The decisive refusal of the Medium to 'try again' may be due to the cause he alleged,—consequent headache and some moral or religious scruple,—or, again, to a moral scruple of a more creditable and commonplace kind. The sceptic, or even the inquirer, learns nothing by narratives like these: for oneself one only knows that Mr. O., at least, was puzzled by what occurred in his presence. He had then no idea that 'science' took any interest in the matter. Now, both he and his younger brother know what dead men may know of these affairs. To imagine that they, or any others like them, would now take any part in such performances seems like a blasphemy on their blameless memories. I should add that I am not accusing the Medium of imposture—I know nothing about him whatever—but pointing out that reason must, if it be true to itself, prefer a cause which is a *vera causa*, a cause which undeniably does exist *in rerum natura*, to a cause which is 'occult.'

For example, you are a sham 'writing medium,' ignorant of Greek. You go and get coached in two lines of Homer. Then,

as medium, you say that your writing hand is possessed (as in this case) by a schoolboy. Inevitably the one person in the 'circle' who knows Greek will ask for Greek. Then you place your two lines and the trick is played. Only people who know the 'medium' more intimately than most of us know ourselves can feel sure that he is above this little game. Their certainty is worth nothing, as evidence, to the rest of the world. That we may be deceived in character is of every-day experience. That a dead schoolboy can write Greek through the hand of one who knows not the tongue needs a good deal of demonstration.

A. LANG.

